

January, 1939

The American Mercury



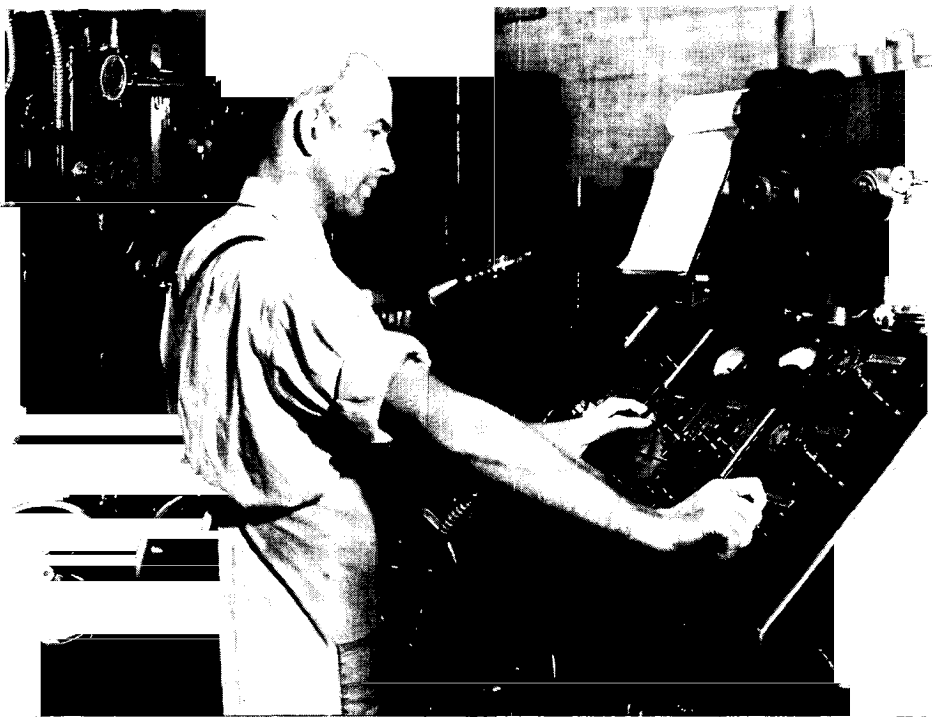
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

NUMBER
181

January

Paul Palmer, *Editor*

1939

Cabbages and Commissars.....	13117	Ted Leitzell	1
After the Peace of Munich.....		Lawrence Dennis	12
Annual Report on Air Safety.....		Kenneth Brown Collings	22
The Truth About Southern Cooking.....		Isabelle Post	30
State Medicine, Navy Style.....		Anonymous	35
The Steel-Strike War.....		Stewart H. Holbrook	40
Jefferson: a Slippery Politician.....		Nathan Schachner	49
How to Beat the Landlord.....		Harriet Weir	56
Karl Marx, the False Prophet.....		William Henry Chamberlin	60
The Red Geranium. <i>A Story</i>		Hobart Lewis	69
EDITORIAL:			
Why Hold an Election in 1940?.....			74
THE OTHER SIDE:			
Epistle to the Right.....		Max Lerner	80
THE STATE OF THE UNION:			
What Is Democracy?.....		Albert Jay Nock	85
AMERICANA.....			
			90
DOWN TO EARTH:			
The Art of Awakening.....		Alan Devoe	93
POETRY:			
I. Oath.....		Frances Frost	97
II. A Gift for Parting.....		Tristram Livingstone	97
III. Pennyworth.....		John Russell McCarthy	98
THE LIBRARY:			
The Man Who Knew Everything.....		John W. Thomason, Jr.	99
THE CHECK LIST.....			
			105
THE OPEN FORUM.....			
			113
THE CONTRIBUTORS.....			
			128
RECORDED MUSIC.....			
			x

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Table of Contents for January

'Unser Amerika'

The Nazi Program in the United States

S. K. PADOVER

Diet Begins at Forty

BENJAMIN GAYELORD HAUSER

They Love Roosevelt

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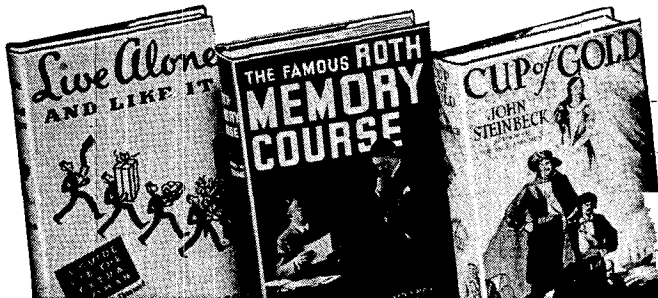
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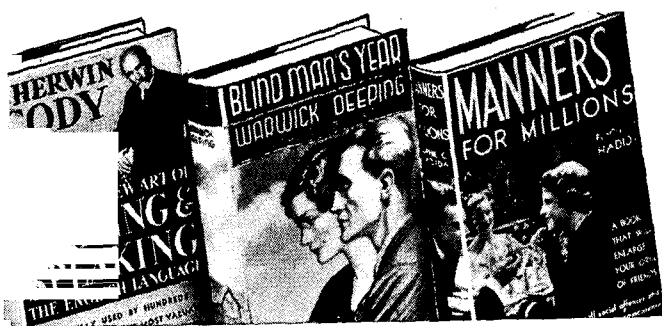
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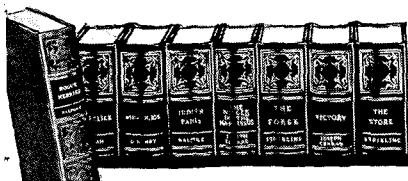
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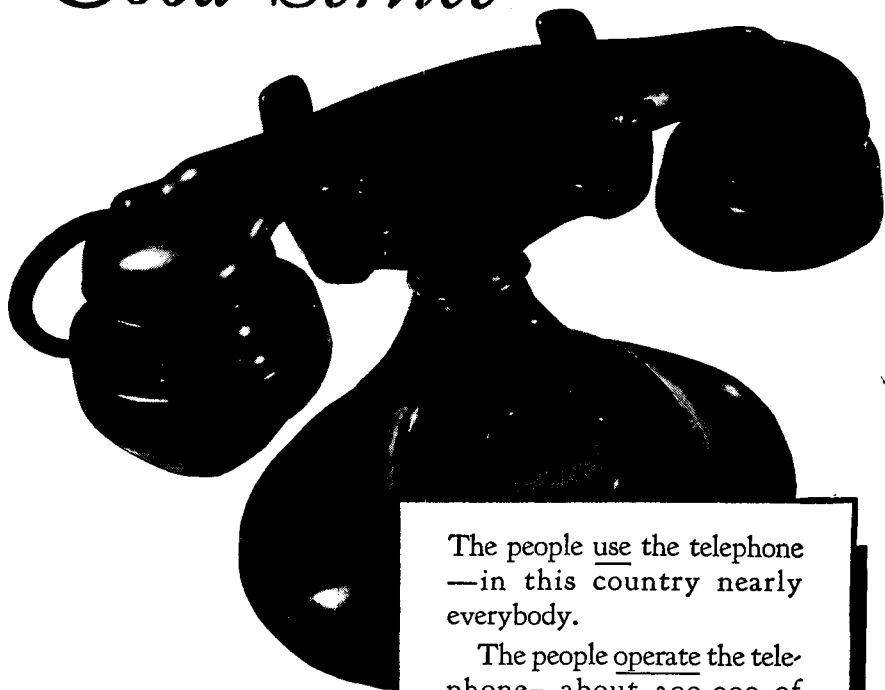
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CABBAGES AND COMMISSARS

By TED LEITZELL

PALMER, ALASKA.—I have been sent up here by THE AMERICAN MERCURY to find out what has happened to the New Deal's bright idea of transplanting several thousand Americans from their homes in the States to this sub-Arctic wilderness. I find—to put it bluntly—that collectivism, following the Soviet pattern with the utmost fidelity, has come to Matanuska Valley. Collectivism—and dismal failure. The experiment has been a flop financially, economically, and sociologically. From the beginning just one colonist, and one only, has made a living farming; and he has done so only by refusing to have anything to do with collectivism. He has succeeded because he is a level-headed, hard-working, old-fashioned American farmer,

able and willing to stand on his own feet.

With tactics warranted to bring a nod of approval from Stalin himself, the other reluctant and unhappy colonists of Roosevelt's Alaskan adventure have been herded into agreements which leave them entirely at the mercy of the local New Deal commissars. They may not market their own produce; they must farm the way they are told; and, even after they pay for their land, they may be thrown off on thirty-day notice if they displease the dictators in any way. They may not even sell their land, nor leave it to their children when they die, without the consent of the all-powerful who plan their daily lives for them. Dependent, for the very food they eat, the

clothes they wear, upon the bureaucratic whims of the head collectivists, the colonists stumble through a dreary life on the Government dole.

All this began, ostensibly, as an opportunity for drought-stricken farmers of the Mid-West to wrest new homes and independence from the wilderness; but it has become a species of regimentation that goes much further than the most elaborate invention of the AAA in the States. Save only castor oil, concentration camps, and firing squads, the settlers have been subjected to almost every form of coercion invented by European dictators. And for these more drastic forms of punishment the petty tyrants of Matanuska have developed their own effective substitutes. Where Stalin says, "If you can't break them, shoot them", the Alaska Rural Rehabilitation Corporation goes on the theory of, "If you can't break them, buy them; if that doesn't work, starve them". This particular piece of New Deal strategy has had wide application throughout the States, but nowhere has it been so successful as among the unfortunate people who were transplanted to our last frontier in search of a mythical promised land. As I have said, after four long years there is only one

farmer in the entire colony who is earning a decent living from his land. Most of the others are either dependent on the Corporation for at least part of their living, or pick up money by running taverns, restaurants, taxi-cabs, etc., supported by the relatively large earnings of the docile little collectivists who have full or part-time jobs working for the Corporation.

The one successful farmer in Matanuska Valley is Walter Pipple, formerly from Robinsdale, Minnesota. By his own efforts he has made a much better farm than any other colonist, built a well-house, porches, and good out-buildings; erected a greenhouse where he is growing tomatoes and cucumbers that sell for fabulous prices; and developed a market for the radishes, turnips, lettuce, beets, and other truck-farm products which he grows successfully. By all the rules of reason this man should be encouraged. His offers to teach other farmers the tricks of truck-farming should meet with a warm reception. His record in becoming self-sustaining in a single year should be a feather in the cap of the Matanuska propagandists. His thrift and industry should be held up as an example to the shiftless ones who have made no effort to become self-

sufficient. But that is not the way of the New Deal, and it is not the way of the Matanuska commissars. Pipple is, unfortunately, a Rugged Individualist, and hence his lone success is distinctly embarrassing to the Comrades. Furthermore, Pipple does not have to depend on the Corporation's bounty; after one costly experiment, he has refused to let the Corporation-dominated co-op market his produce. Because of these things, because he is holding to the original promise made him when he reluctantly embarked for Alaska, because he won't sign away forever his rights to the land he purchased, because he won't dance upon the air at orders from the commissars, they are doing their damndest to evict him. So far they haven't been successful. The tactics that ran other colonists out of Alaska, and made most of the remainder sign to the Corporation's tune, haven't worked. Pipple has that quaint old American habit of standing up for his rights.

Meanwhile, the experiment in collectivism continues. Its history — so far unreported accurately to the taxpayers who are footing the bill — is more extraordinary than that of any other rattle-brain experiment tried out by the New

Dealers on those most docile of all guinea pigs, the American people.

II

Settlement in Matanuska Valley began about twenty-five years ago when a few old sourdoughs, tired of chasing all over Alaska in search of elusive bonanzas, built log cabins and settled down to hunt, trap, prospect a little, and raise some vegetables. A few of them did fairly well, and found the relatively mild climate a welcome relief from the rigorous Winters and blistering Summers of the interior. In the Valley, after the dense jungle of brush and scrubby timber has been removed, is sandy land capable of producing most root vegetables, legumes, and, if the season is very favorable, small grain.

Colonel Otto F. Ohlson, general manager of the Alaska Railroad (owned by the Department of the Interior) conceived the idea of attracting independent settlers to Matanuska some ten years ago. Had his ideas prevailed when the present colonization scheme was born, the affair might, conceivably, have had some success. But its fate was sealed on the day the New Deal brainstormers embraced the idea and proceeded to give it the

benefit of the same gigantic intellects that conceived the Passamaquoddy and Florida Ship Canal projects.

Ohlson did his best to keep the project down to earth. First, he wanted a year to get land cleared so the settlers would have a chance to start farming right at the start. Second, he knew that his railroad served only a few thousand consumers, and he did not want to bring in so many farmers that crops would rot on the ground. Third, he wanted each family to have enough land so there would be a good chance to earn a living. Finally, he insisted that all the newcomers be bona fide farmers.

But the New Deal social workers horned right in, and all hell began to pop. There was no time allowed for clearing land—apparently the Comrades thought Alaska was something like our Middle Western States, where removal of a few straggling sage plants is all that is needed to prepare the soil. They did not know the Valley was covered with dense, tropic-like jungle. Anyway, FDR wanted results, and the transplantation had to begin right now.

The grandiose dreamers decided to begin with two thousand families. Ohlson fought that idea tooth and nail, and did get the

allotment down to two hundred. Then came the crack-brained, “scientific” theories of rehabilitation. At one Washington meeting a woman executive even insisted that there must be some form of recreation for the poor pioneers, and urged that the balanced community should include professional entertainers!

“I got so goddam mad,” the Colonel told me, “that I slammed my papers on the table and walked out.”

From that point on, the history of Matanuska’s mismanagement differs from that of other New Deal projects in detail only. Somebody ordered all the supplies at once, with the result that windows, for instance, reached the Valley long before tools to build houses. Many of the colonists had never before been on a farm—butchers, bakers, blacksmiths, carpenters, and a goodly number of undesirable loafers and radical agitators selected for the trek by local Relief officials in the States as good riddance of bad rubbish. Some of the farmers were good, industrious citizens—others had been unsuccessful even during boom times. Alaskan officials wanted to give each colonist at least sixty acres of land; but the *weisenheimers* in Washington cut this down to

forty. Finally, the Alaska Rural Rehabilitation Corporation was set up to run the project, so that the colonists could have no voice in its management.

The unfortunate colonists arrived a thousand strong, Relief derelicts buoyed up by promises of rich and fertile land plus working capital of three thousand dollars on long-term loans. Even to the dazed and defeated, who were in the majority, the plan offered new hope. But when they arrived they had to live in tents. Rain poured down. There was sickness, and a renewal of the dull, apathetic despair they had sought to escape. A few, a very few, went to work preparing for the future. A larger minority began to howl for their rights and privileges, threatening all sorts of dire things if they were not given better food and clothing than they had ever enjoyed before in their lives. Most of them just sat, watching the rain leak through their tents.

Orders came from Washington to satisfy the colonists at any cost. They were allowed virtually unlimited credit. They were helped to radio sets, allowed to select furniture unsuited to their needs.

When a saw-mill project was organized to cut logs for cabins, nobody squawked because many set-

tlers quit the gang as soon as they had enough logs to meet their own requirements. They were told to order a year's supply of clothing for their families — not on credit, but as a gift. One man ordered twenty-two pairs of shoes, twenty suits of clothes, and a comparable wardrobe for his family. Others went down to the Commissary, which sells merchandise at prices considerably lower than those in Anchorage, and bought far more than they needed, charging it to their accounts. Much of this merchandise was sold at still lower prices to miners and prospectors for cash, and the happy colonists dumped their profits in the beer parlors.

Radical agitators sent a delegation to Washington to get bigger and better handouts. With credit unlimited, many ran up fantastic debts. One man got \$16,000 in the red by the simple expedient of squawking and writing letters to the States if he did not get everything his little heart desired. Later, when his continued presence proved embarrassing to the Commissars, he left Alaska, telling friends that, in return for his leaving, the Corporation had canceled the entire debt.

The more the radicals got, the loftier became their taste. During one salmon-run the cannery put

up hundreds of cases and distributed them free. Loafers, who a few years earlier had looked on canned salmon as a luxury, now spurned such common fare and fed it to their cats. Credit for groceries was too easy.

Disgruntled and disillusioned colonists began to leave the Valley, and chaos increased until it was finally decided to scale down the fantastic debts which had been allowed to accumulate. Even the Pollyannas realized that no homestead could carry a debt-load of 10,000, 12,000, or 14,000 dollars. A debt adjuster was appointed at a salary of \$25 a day. Ostensibly, debts were reduced in compensation for work done on improvements. Actually, the men who really worked on their places, who had thriftily bought only those items they really needed, had little or nothing scaled off. It was the loafer, the man who had never grown a radish on his land, who lived entirely on the "subsistence budget" or on regular employment from the Corporation, who had most of his debt forgiven. Col. Ohlson himself has said very frankly that, if the thrifty men had been given treatment commensurate with that given the imprudent ones, the Corporation would have owed them money.

III

In all this demoralization, Walter Pipple, the man who believed in working for a living, was an outstanding exception. Back in the States he had fought his own way. He had gone broke raising corn and hogs in 1932, but was making a fine comeback under his own power with a truck-farm in Robinsdale when the New Deal officials first talked to him of Alaska. He turned down the idea; but the Utopians kept after him, painting a picture in glowing colors. They described the co-operative community where he could finance a farm on favorable terms, where there was an unlimited market at high prices; they stressed the pioneering angle, the opportunity to insure a future for his children, free from the hazards of farming in Minnesota. Their story finally appealed to his individualism—the quality that later caused him so much trouble. If there was one place where a man could work out his own destiny by his own efforts, it must be on America's last frontier. He went along.

As soon as he arrived at Matanuska, while the other colonists were running around in confusion, Pipple went straight to work. He had taken the promises seri-

ously, and accepted his own obligations in the same way. Let the others live on credit if they wished; to him a bill was a debt that must some day be paid. He built most of his own furniture himself, and, with his entire family helping, began to put in his crops. Within a year he was producing top-notch garden truck. He asked the Corporation when the co-op would be ready to handle marketing, and was told to handle his own sales. In a short time he had established markets in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Seward. When the co-op finally organized he was one of the most enthusiastic early members, but he soon began to smell a rat. Unlike successful farmer co-operatives in the States (and in Europe), where management is entirely in the hands of the members, it was run from the top down, and the colonists took whatever price was offered for their produce. Pipple refused an offer from the co-op of \$115 for five hogs, because he was able to sell four of them in Anchorage for \$116, and keep the other, which was worth \$28, for his own use.

By this time he was getting somewhat suspicious of the whole development. He had explored all possible markets thoroughly

enough to learn that ten good truck-farmers could produce enough to fill the entire demand. He had gathered test figures from the Agricultural Experiment Station which showed the futility of trying to raise livestock — figures showing that it cost \$15 to feed a lamb that had a market value of \$9, over \$100 to feed one calf through the winter, and 35 cents a dozen to produce eggs that sold for 30.

But when talk of debt adjustment filled the air, Pipple decided it might be a good business move to let the co-op handle his garden truck. It would mean a loss of about \$500, he figured, but he might more than get that back from a favorable scaling-down of his long-term debt. He was assured that the new contract would guarantee him a warranty deed to his land after he had paid off his indebtedness. And so he sent in a certified check to pay off his chattel mortgage of a few hundred dollars, and spent \$1200 building a greenhouse where he could grow tomatoes and cucumbers. These fresh, hard-to-handle perishables command fabulous prices in Alaska. He also set out raspberry and currant bushes.

The Comrades, meantime, were tightening their grip. In Decem-

ber, 1937, each colonist was informed by a form letter from Leo B. Jacobs, General Manager of the Corporation, that a credit equal to principal and interest "will be credited on that certain note covering second mortgage on chattels made by yourself to the Alaska Rural Rehabilitation Corporation", on condition that the colonist on January 1, 1940, were a member in good standing of the co-op or its assigns, and a member in good standing of the colony. And, shortly, the new contracts arrived. They provided—and still provide today—that the purchaser must be a member of the co-op; that he must farm his land "under the advice and direction of the Corporation and in compliance with his contract or contracts with the Matanuska Valley Farmers Co-operating Association"; that he cannot build or tear down buildings or lease or mortgage his land without written consent from the Corporation; that the Corporation may hold any moneys due him to satisfy claims against him; that, even after full payment for the land to which these rules apply, the Corporation may oust him or subsequent owners on thirty-day notice by paying him a price to be determined by a committee of three (one from the

owner, one from Corporation, and one selected by these two), "less any expenses incurred by the Corporation, including all court costs, attorney's fees, or other expenses necessitated by the Purchaser's breach or failure to comply with any of the provisions of this contract". All of which boils down to this: whenever the Corporation decides that the purchaser has failed to comply with the terms of the contract, it is in a position to see him thrown off and virtually its own price paid for his land. Under this contract the owner will never own his land unless he belongs to the co-op and does what the commissars order, and he can't sell the land nor can his children inherit it, without permission from the Corporation.

The colonists howled to high heaven when they saw the terms of the new contracts. In five of the eight organized districts, settlers voted unanimously to reject them. But howling and voting "No" did little good. Every colonist except Pipple was more or less dependent on the Corporation for a living. Those getting subsistence budgets had their checks held up until they signed the contracts. Those doing full-time work were told to sign, or else. Feed and seed loans were cut off, and non-signers found it

difficult to buy seed, even for cash.

A sample of the coercive tactics used appears in the following letter, sent to a man who was at first reluctant to sign:

Alaska Rural Rehabilitation
Corporation
Matanuska Valley Colonization
Project
Palmer, Alaska
May 17, 1938

Mr. Bernard Reiten,
Palmer, Alaska

Dear Mr. Reiten:

Your final papers including your Land and Realty Sales contracts and mortgages are ready for your signature.

On May 10, 1938, a letter was sent to you stating that the papers were ready. It is imperative that these documents be executed at once.

The office is open afternoons as well as forenoons for the execution of the above described papers only. It will be impossible to continue to extend Corporation funds on your tract unless these permanent contract purchases are signed.

No further advancement will be made under the Security and Development program until you have executed your final documents.

Very truly yours,
Alaska Rural Rehabilitation
Corporation
(signed) By Leo B. Jacobs

This meant that, until the contract was signed, the Corporation would clear no more land on Reiten's homestead, and that he would have no more credit at the Commissary.

Under pressure of this kind, virtually all of the colonists gave in and signed an agreement far different from what they had been promised, and far different from the first contract they had accepted. Most of them were tractable sheep who are now safe from being tossed out because they will be good boys and girls so long as the government feeds them. Others signed up because there was no particular reason not to, and they saved themselves a lot of trouble. Reiten, for example, signed. He could never make his farm pay, but did a lot of carpenter work for his neighbors and made \$1200 one year with an ice contract from the railroad. He hasn't put a dime's worth of improvements on his place, and doesn't intend to. He bought a "club" that makes him a nice living from sales of beer, wine, and food to other colonists, tourists, and workers at nearby gold mines. He does just enough work on his homestead to comply with minimum requirements. And, to play safe, he has taken in a partner at the club, so the Corporation can't freeze him out by cutting off bank credit or getting his liquor license canceled. Then there is "Charlie", who also signed. His wife works in the fields while he drives a caterpillar tractor for the

Corporation at a dollar an hour. He figures on raising quite a little food, on salting \$1200 or \$1400 in wages, and getting outside next year with a nice stake.

But Walter Pipple was dismayed by the terms of the new contract. He failed to sign, ignored the follow-up letters. And, three months after he had sent it, his check for the chattel mortgage was returned with the captious comment that he was not a member in good standing of the co-op. He retorted that he had been a member in good standing at the time it went in; then he banked the check and waited for developments. An official of the Corporation came out one day and ordered him to move along. Pipple told him to go to hell. There were many threats, but he kept on doing his work and minding his own business.

The Corporation was in a spot. Pipple had cash money in the bank, and did not need their credit. He had markets for his products, and the demand increased from month to month because of the superlative quality of his products, compared with those produced by some of the other colonists. Baffled, the Comrades subjected him to every kind of annoyance and pressure. Rumors spread that he was going to leave, which is not

good for a man in business. He had been drawing water from a hydrant to irrigate his land during the planting season; suddenly the water was cut off, so that now he has to drive a couple of miles further and dip it out of a creek. Finally, the Corporation has entered suit against him in the latest attempt to dispossess him.

Yet, for the time being at least, Pipple has the Corporation licked. He doesn't care how much the others are coddled, and is not worried about his debts, for he is making money regularly. The important thing to him is that he can prosper without any help from the Comrades, that the land will be his as he pays for it under his original contract, and that his kids are going to have a real stake in the future. He is not going to relinquish his hard-earned rights without a battle.

The future of the other colonists is problematical. Eighty-six of the original two hundred families have already pulled out. Ten of the sixty new families have gone, and many others are just waiting for a chance. The million-dollar market that dazzled them is mostly beyond their reach, for much of the food can be imported far cheaper than it can be grown. They kept going last summer be-

cause of an extra \$350,000 appropriation which was used largely to pay men for driving tractors to clear their own land. But government help is scheduled to cease now, and disinterested Alaskans who are familiar with the situation doubt if more than a dozen among all the colonist families will be able to make a living from their homesteads.

Collectivistic developments have robbed many of the colonists of what little initiative they possessed. They put it this way: why bother to build up a place that can be taken from you or your heirs whenever a Corporation official doesn't like you? Most of them say they never intend to pay a cent on their notes; they figure they will get their homesteads without it. As for the shut-off of Government funds—hell, the Government brought them up to Alaska and it can damned well keep on taking care of them. If it fails, some of them can get jobs in mines, some will make a go of it prospecting, and others have faith in the legend that any man going broke in Alaska will be given transportation back to the States.

A financial summary of this Utopian venture in the Valley makes even drearier reading than

a squint at Harry Hopkins' leaf-raking activities. Total expenditures have been nearly \$5,000,000, and there are 164 families left on the project. Of these, one is really successful, and a handful more may make the grade without further help. The average cost per family for "rehabilitation" is thus \$34,000.

But—who knows?—this money may have been well spent. In individualist Walter Pippel, so successful, and in the other colonists who have failed so miserably under collectivism, we have a perfect example of what happens under the planned benefits of New Deal paternalism. We have a positive proof that, while individualists who are willing to work can make a good living in spite of an almost overwhelming bureaucracy, there isn't a chance for Relief-demoralized derelicts to be nursed toward self-sufficiency in a totalitarian Utopia. The Comrades set up their own laboratory, under their own rules, and spent your money and mine with a free hand: the residue in the bottom of the test tube is of their own making. When the final results of the Matanuska experiment are known throughout the land, the \$5,000,000 laboratory fee may seem a bargain.

AFTER THE PEACE OF MUNICH

BY LAWRENCE DENNIS

As it is generally considered sinful to denounce peace in the abstract, and as it is rather impractical for the United States, without Britain and France, to wage war on Hitler in the concrete, most Americans, keyed up by press and radio to a high pitch of war-expectancy, have felt badly let down by the Peace of Munich. True, in the Gallup Poll, 60 per cent thought that England and France did the best thing in giving in to Germany instead of going to war; but Americans generally were most dissatisfied with the terms of the settlement and the prospects it seemed to offer for future peace. The same poll showed that 73 per cent considered the German demand for the Sudetenland unjustified; and that 58 per cent felt that, for a number of years, the settlement would result in more risks of war than guarantees of peace. In other words, most Americans think they prefer the Munich Peace to a general European war; but their resentment against the peace terms favorable to Hitler

raises a doubt whether their expressed preference for peace is altogether sincere. Had Chamberlain and Daladier felt as strongly against the peace terms as a majority of the American newspapers, it is probable that, instead of the Peace of Munich, we should have had a general war.

For it does not make sense to say that one wants peace if one is unwilling to pay the price of peace in the given situation. Everyone always wants peace on his own terms; but everyone can never have peace on his own terms in any important international clash of interests. It is only after a crushing defeat of one side in war that the other side can have peace on its own terms. For Chamberlain, the central problem in the Czech crisis was that of buying peace as cheaply as possible: it was not that of making what he knew would be a futile effort to obtain peace on his own terms. His reason was quite simple: having regard only for British interests, Chamberlain was convinced that, should he fail to

buy peace, the resulting European war would prove an uncompensated disaster for Britain. Chamberlain was first, last, and only an Englishman throughout the whole crisis and settlement.

A large majority of the American people, on the other hand, went into paroxysms of emotion during the crisis and sulked over the settlement. At no time did they, in any large number, think in terms of *American* interests. They thought in terms of *foreign* rights and wrongs. They followed the crisis not as Americans but as sentimentalists, moralists, legalists, idealists, communists, liberals, Anglophiles, Francophiles, and foreigners of all nationalities.

Fortunately for America and the world, Chamberlain and Daladier were uninfluenced by American public opinion. Happily they disappointed American expectations of a war to stop Hitler and to save civilization. But in another world crisis different statesmen and ideas may be in power in England and France. American war hysteria may then be a decisive influence for war in European councils. Therein lies a future danger for us. Hence the present need for a calm review of the facts of our recent emotional involvement in a European crisis and a more in-

telligent orientation of American opinion in the post-Munich world, which to most Americans is still incomprehensible, though its major outlines are extremely obvious and likely to endure for a long, long time. Let it be remembered that the agreement reached at Munich — the world's most denounced pact since 1918 — has turned out to be the only international pact made during that period which has averted a war. The much-applauded League of Nations, the World Court, the Kellogg Anti-War Pact, all these accomplished literally nothing to prevent, shorten, or terminate any one of the many wars, declared and undeclared, which have been fought during the period since Versailles. Yet this one pact, which has the unique distinction of having averted a major war, is the pact which is almost universally denounced by liberals and internationalists. Why is this? Let us examine — leaving entirely to one side the ethics of Chamberlain and the barbarism of Hitler — the actual facts in the case.

II

First of all, for our guidance in foreign policy, the fact must be stressed that the recent crisis was remarkable for the rationality of

the actions of all the principal European actors, and for the irrationality of the reactions thereto of American spectators. Unpalatable as it may be for us to accept the idea, it must be recognized that Hitler, when analyzed simply on the basis of historical fact, is not only the greatest political genius since Napoleon, but also the most rational. Fifteen years ago he conceived a plan for German destiny; and even put it into book form. During the past five years he has been successfully carrying out this plan to the letter. Yet American press and public opinion have insistently treated him as a madman. Dr. A. A. Brill, a distinguished psychiatrist, diagnosed him as a case of infantilism, self-delusion, paranoia, and sadism. The leading American newspapers have played up the insanity idea with a vengeance. Yet, during five years, Hitler has not made one important mistake or suffered one serious setback in the realization of his objectives. He has transformed Germany from a vanquished nation, fettered with the chains of the peace treaties, into the master of Europe. He has added 12,000,000 Germans to the Reich, liquidated the finest auxiliary army of the Anglo-French Alliance, maneuvered Russia out of the European con-

cert of nations, reduced France to the position of a second-rate power, made the British lion purr like a tabby cat, and ended unemployment in Germany. All this may be the work of one who is morally reprehensible, but could it be the accomplishment of a lunatic?

The truth of the matter, which the American press has persistently distorted, is that in recent years it is the dictatorships which have been rational, and the democracies which have been most irrational. That this truth is not academic Prof. Beneš can now well appreciate in his exile, while his country finds itself obliged to abandon democracy for dictatorship. Hitler's achievements have left Americans stunned because they upset cherished American assumptions about the insanity of the dictators and the triumphant rationality of the democracies. A rational political genius who gets what he wants is incomprehensible to a people steeped in the irrational rationalism of men like Woodrow Wilson and Franklin D. Roosevelt, who start things they cannot finish. It should be remembered that the American State Department has not scored a diplomatic success since the dispatch of Cleveland's bombastic communication to the British over Venezuela in the 'Nineties; while

Hitler has scored nothing but successes in the diplomatic field for the past five years.

The objectives of Hitler's foreign policy, of course, are the traditional German objectives of the *Drang nach Osten*. Hitler's statesmanship differs from that of Bismarck and the Kaiser mainly in that Hitler is more rational and successful. As for these traditional German objectives, it may be said that, for Germans, they are as rational as going to the pantry when you are hungry or to the fire when you are cold. Eighty million German bellies crave the food of Central and Eastern Europe and take steps to obtain it. What could be more rational? Even Hitler's much-caricatured emotionalism is one of the most rational things about him. He knows that the masses can be united and led only by their emotions, and he knows how to unify and lead them through these emotions. Anyone who thinks that the masses can be unified and led otherwise may be a rationalist, but he is no more rational than a man who pours water instead of gasoline into the tank of his automobile. In the Czech crisis, while the American newspapers were running scare-heads making Hitler seem a madman amuck, his every move was as

coldly logical as it was immediately successful. The crime of our press was not falsification in reporting these moves, but gross misrepresentation in interpreting them.

First, Hitler maneuvered the Sudeten crisis so as to bring Chamberlain to Berchtesgaden to sue for a peaceful settlement—the greatest triumph scored over an English prime minister by a European statesman in hundreds of years. Second, Hitler got Chamberlain to secure acceptance, in principle, of German annexation of Sudetenland, making Germany master of continental Europe and involving by implication the British abandonment of its traditional balance-of-power policy. Third, having secured acceptance in principle of his demands, Hitler, at Godesberg, set a time-limit and method of execution for the satisfaction of his earlier demands. Each of these steps was as logical as it was successful.

At the Godesberg stage, the American public, after a wave of indignation over the Chamberlain surrender to the Berchtesgaden demands, went completely haywire under the leadership of an ignorant and sensation-seeking press. Yet the Godesberg demands were entirely logical. Had Hitler let matters drift without a time

and manner-of-execution ultimatum, he might easily have been double-crossed by the Czechs or failed of his objectives in the tortuous delays of diplomacy in which Beneš was a past master. Hitler naturally understood that the British and French, given half a chance, might double-cross him exactly as they had done Beneš. Hitler was out to get the Sudetenland, to dismember Czechoslovakia, to isolate Russia, to liquidate Beneš and communism in Central Europe, and to make Germany master of Eastern and Central Europe. Unlike Beneš, he was not interested in becoming the hero of the democracies and the darling of American women's clubs. Hitler got his objectives 100 per cent simply because his every move was rational.

The idea, popularized by our press, that Hitler gravely endangered world peace by presenting his Godesberg time-limit demands, was entirely unwarranted, as Hitler so well knew. Neither Hitler in his rabble-rousing, sabre-rattling speech at the Sportspalast, nor Chamberlain in his lachrymose masterpiece of radio histrionics, closed to each other the door to eventual agreement. The mobilizations on both sides would have been extremely dangerous under

1914 parliamentary democracy, as popular passions, once aroused to war fever, might under pre-war democratic practices, have got out of control. But as diplomacy is now being practiced by the dictators and their Tory apprentices in London and Paris, public opinion can be turned on or off, up or down, just like a radio. Chamberlain had to call up the French reserves and send the British fleet to its stations in order to have as many blue chips on the table as Hitler when the two met in the next session of their no-limit game. Hitler knew all along that he could always settle on the basis of the last British offer and that the British price would be raised pretty high to avert a German invasion of Czechoslovakia in defiance of the British and French.

Chamberlain and Daladier were equally rational in the crisis. As already stated, they were fully convinced that it would be against the interests of their respective nations to fight a world war for Czechoslovakia, as such a war could be won only by communism. This conviction made war at all times extremely unlikely, whatever the superficial appearances of the moment. The weight of this conviction was almost entirely obscured by our press. At the same

time, however, the French mobilization and the British fleet movements afforded Chamberlain an excellent opportunity to play peacemaker while selling Czechoslovakia down the river, as had been planned all along. By whipping up a real war scare and showing they were not scared (not much) of Germany, Chamberlain and Daladier created a diversion, to bamboozle those simple souls who take treaties of alliance seriously, and were at first indignant over the so-called betrayal of Czechoslovakia. Had the original Berchtesgaden sell-out of Czechoslovakia gone through without the intervening comedy of a major war scare, dramatized for Londoners by the digging of bomb-proof shelters in Hyde Park, Chamberlain would have been turned out within a month by the outraged moral sensibilities of a sentimental British public. Managing these susceptibilities is Chamberlain's forte and necessary for his tenure of power and the prevention of a coalition government headed by Churchill and Eden and made up of sentimental Conservatives, Liberals, and Laborites. The so-called betrayal went through on schedule — Hitler's schedule at that — and instead of being denounced, as at first, for

the betrayal, Chamberlain and Daladier, thanks to the intervening diversion of a war scare, were applauded as great peacemakers for averting a war they knew perfectly well all along would never take place, unless Hitler turned out to be the madman the American press represented him to be — something Chamberlain, of course, never for a moment supposed. This Chamberlain play, in which Benito and Franklin D. were allowed minor roles at the end, was worthy of Hitler at his best, and no doubt accounts for the high esteem in which Chamberlain is held in the Friedrichstrasse.

Whether Chamberlain was right or wrong in his basic assumptions that England could not afford to risk war and communism, and would do better to accept a Nazi hegemony over the Continent of Europe is a question I do not here discuss. I agree 100 per cent with Mr. Chamberlain's assumptions, but I recognize that uncertainties about the future and questions of taste and ultimate values cannot be argued. I merely argue that Chamberlain's view was a rational one for an Englishman to take, while fully admitting that the opposite view taken by Churchill and Duff-Cooper, as well as by the communists of the world, was also

rational according to different premises. What was not rational was the American view which favored peace, but disapproved paying the price of its procurement. I argue further that it is irrational for Americans to direct American policy according to contrary-to-fact assumptions and sentimentalism over foreign interests instead of a recognition of realities and the demands of American interest. President Roosevelt, in October 1937, called for a quarantine on the aggressor nations, and in September 1938 sent an urgent telegram to one of them virtually begging acceptance of the Chamberlain plan for the partition of Czechoslovakia and the scrapping of a French treaty obligation. Had Roosevelt respected realities he would never have made the absurd utterances of his Chicago speech.

As for the rationality of the minor parts played by the Czechs, the Russians, and the Italians in the Czech crisis — the French part was one with that of Britain, France having completely lost its rank as a great power thanks to the recent Blum Popular Front Governments — little need be said. Beneš naturally played a strong hand to conserve his country's advantages under the treaties of the late war so long as he felt certain

he could count on the last drop of French, British, and Russian blood to defend him. When that certainty was terminated, Beneš logically retired and left Czechoslovakia to turn from France to Germany and from democracy to fascism, or from the losers to the winners. As for Russia and communism, the Soviet part in the crisis was relatively minor, but wholly rational and consistent with Russian interest. The most obvious interest of Soviet Russia was, and remains, a suicidal war between the democracies and the fascist powers which would leave Russia the strongest nation in Europe and the way clear for a Russian-imposed communist revolution all over Europe. During such a war, it would be in the Russian interest to welch completely on military aid to the democracies, thus conserving Russian power for the final kill of both democracy and fascism after they had nearly destroyed each other. These intriguing possibilities have been the brilliant objectives of Litvinoff's policy for several years. Now that the policy has failed, he would seem in line for a purge. This, perhaps, is why he has been dallying so long and wistfully at Geneva for his final taste of life. Stalin must now choose between alliance

or rapprochement with Germany, and intensive armaments to increase Russian invulnerability.

As for Mussolini, he was also thoroughly logical throughout the Czech crisis, going out of his way to make speeches for Hitler's side and, at the same time, holding himself available to serve his pal as an impartial mediator at Munich. Most Americans counted on Mussolini to desert Hitler on the general theory that a divine providence always saves the British through the blunders and treachery of their foes. Obviously, with the British sun setting and the Nazi sun just rising over Europe, a realist like Mussolini would be the last to desert a co-religionist and go over to a former ally who double-crossed Italy at the end of the last war and applied sanctions to Italy in 1936. The sanctions episode, of course, compounded Italian hate with contempt for the British, because the British failed in an irresolute and ill-conceived gesture. Italy will need Germany in the future in order to pluck France and Britain in the Mediterranean. If Germany and Italy fall out, it should be after and not before their next big loot. But with all Africa, Asia Minor, and Western Europe for the Berlin-Rome axis to dominate or colonize, it

would be madness for Mussolini not to be loyal to Hitler.

III

What is the rational American policy for the post-Munich world? Clearly this world will be divisible into four areas of power: the first, the Americas dominated by the United States; the second, continental Europe dominated by Germany in close partnership with Italy; the third, the Far East dominated by Japan; and the fourth, the British Empire. Both militarily and economically the strongest of these areas is that dominated by us, because geographically, it is the easiest to defend and economically, the most self-sufficient. The German area or the new economic *Grossraumwirtschaft* consisting of Germany, plus Central and Eastern Europe, will be the next strongest because it is the next easiest to defend and economically pretty self-sufficient. The British Empire is the weakest because of geographical dispersion, and an abject dependence on international trade and international finance, commissions, and shipping, both for supplies and net income from foreigners. In a world of closed economies, Britain is doomed to decline in population

and power, as well as in living standards. No possible British fleet can defend the British Empire against Japan, Germany, and Italy simultaneously attacking. In this world-situation our only policy is to uphold the Monroe Doctrine and abandon entirely the Far East and Europe. We need not fear the world-supremacy of one nation like Germany or Japan. Either would quickly wreck any empire it might build in the next few years if it attempted to extend its domain to this hemisphere against an effective American defense. By the same token, we should wreck our economy quite as much if we tried to crush a strong Germany on European battlefields or to defeat in naval battle six thousand miles from our westernmost boundary a strong Japan such as may emerge a few years after the successful conquest of China.

In the new world now shaping up into these power areas and closed regional economies, the collective-security ideas of Woodrow Wilson and the free-trade ideas of Cordell Hull have no place. Rights and security will be determined by the force factors, which are economic and political as well as military. Trade will be regimented. Barter rather than free trade will

be the international economic pattern. There will be larger armies and more economic control by the State. Our first task is to stop sentimentalizing over these trends and to start adjusting ourselves to them. We have seen that we cannot stop Hitler or fascism by hysteria, moral indignation, or misrepresentation. The Haves are on the defensive, but they must not expect to be able to solve their problems through a victorious war over the Have-Nots. The Haves cannot afford to fight; the Have-Nots can. However distasteful it may seem, the only policy for the survival of the Haves is one of appeasement, accommodation, and sharing the wealth so far as the Have-Nots are concerned. Law enforcement against the Have-Nots is out of the question. In pursuing this policy, the Haves should try to appease the Have-Nots as much as possible at the expense of backward peoples or areas. The Haves should also try to enlarge the trade opportunities of the Have-Nots by artificially raising living standards in the Have areas, thus increasing the volume of goods which can be bartered with the Have-Not countries. This means that the Haves must avoid deflation and foster State-subsidized or State-stimu-

lated capital investment and consumption.

The most important lesson for us to learn from the Czech crisis and the Munich Peace, however, is that we are living in a new world in which the principles we used to believe firmly established are, in large part, invalid. We must expect the Great Powers to follow, not the precedents of the past, but the logic of the great new ideologies on the ascendant. And we must expect the logic of these ideologies to shape our own developments, political as well as economic. Force has always ruled the world. So long as the democracies or the Haves had the upper hand, their rule of force was piously called the rule of law. Now that the force factors have become more evenly divided between the Haves and Have-Nots, it will be said by the Haves that, wherever the force of the Have-Nots is paramount, as on the Yangtze or the Danube, there is a rule of force, violence, unreason, and lawlessness. The distinction is simple: the rule of *my* force is the rule of law; the rule of *your* force, if you

are against me, is the rule of lawlessness and violence. From now on force will rule more nakedly than during the Nineteenth Century because the Have-Nots are no longer the lesser breeds without the law and without modern weapons. Force will henceforth rule with less use of the mysteries, fictions, chicanes, hypocrisies, and delays of the law and old-fashioned diplomacy; that is, in the relations of nations and classes within nations. I am not sure that greater intellectual honesty about the role of force will be a bad thing, but whether anyone likes it or not, that is what we are in for, the rule of naked force. So we should shift our emphasis from legalism to force-factors, which are spiritual (propaganda) and economic (jobs, bread, and circuses) as well as military. Our newspapers, radio commentators, and columnists owe us an interpretation of the news more in line with the logic of the new ideologies and their imperatives, and less in accord with the wishful thinking of tired liberals and old-fashioned conservatives.



ANNUAL REPORT ON AIR SAFETY

BY KENNETH BROWN COLLINGS

IN THE PAST, this writer has several times reported on the safety of air travel in THE MERCURY, which seems to be the only magazine sufficiently free from advertising influence to discuss this vital subject honestly and frankly. At the request of the Editor, the report is now placed on an annual basis, the specifications as to scope and strict neutrality being clear and emphatic—a comprehensive survey, conducted once each year, is to be followed by presentation in each January issue of unquestioned figures as to whether air travel is becoming safer, THE MERCURY caring nothing whatsoever as to the nature of the facts revealed so long as they are accurate. That such an unbiased presentation may itself be instrumental in bettering conditions has already been demonstrated: the closing recommendations of the blind-flying report in the September 1934 issue—to the effect that weather maps should be posted in all air terminals, and passengers informed in advance of uncertain

plated periods of blind operation—are now standard practice.

The present report finds a modicum of increased safety for airline passengers and a distinct improvement for pilots. It finds that the airline operators—called air carriers under the term of the Civil Aeronautics Act of 1938—have been, with one glaring exception, commendably quick to adopt technological improvements tending to increase flying safety. The exception is parachutes. For reasons which we shall examine, the air carriers still regard the lifesaver of the air as anathema, something akin to suicide and syphilis all in one package. Our investigation further reveals the continuing fact that all flying is extremely dangerous when compared to normal occupations or railroad travel, and fabulously dangerous when compared to travel by Pullman. It proves conclusively that air crashes take more lives at certain seasons of the year; it indicates that passengers in the rear seats have a slightly better chance of surviving

a crash than those up front; and there are strong reasons to believe that fatalities are less frequent when flying over less rugged terrain.

American Airlines, transcontinental, is the major airline with the longest continuous operating record free from passenger fatalities. Eastern Air Lines, operating from New York and Chicago to Florida and Texas, holds the all-time safety record. Among Class B air carriers — defined as those flying less than 50,000,000 passenger miles per year, but more than 2,000,000 — Pennsylvania-Central Airlines, operating from Milwaukee to Norfolk and, more recently, from Buffalo to Baltimore, holds both the modern and all-time records, never having killed a passenger or crew-member. (All figures to the date of this writing.) And, finally, this survey finds that the “safety statistics” sponsored by the aviation industry are probably the most fantastic conglomeration of hokum in the history of publicity.

Since the deceptiveness of these figures revolves around the employment of fatally-defective standards of comparison, by examining them first, we shall not only dispose of the errors, but by a simple process of elimination arrive at

the only true standard. Both the Civil Aeronautics Authority and the air carriers insist on measuring air safety by the yardstick of “passenger miles”, or “airplane miles”. Neither has much significance, because human beings still live in terms of years and hours and are not relegated to the junk pile upon the completion of an allotted 100,000 miles. At the most, such standards can effect comparisons between present-day air safety and air safety of the past; whereas the average man wants to know how dangerous flying is when compared to taking a train, driving a car, or not traveling at all. Air mileage standards are not only completely unusable for that purpose, but they also permit flagrant distortions of the truth. They enable the air propagandists to apply swift opiates to the painful memory of each air disaster by publishing “cumulative” totals of safe air mileage falsely derived from adding the mileage of the more fortunate airlines while ignoring the carrier which had the crash. They furnished the late Amelia Earhart with the “data” for her widely-publicized statement in the public prints of early 1937 that if one flew a thousand miles per day every day in the year, it would be fifty-eight years before one might ex-

pect fatal injury. Even if her basic information had been correct—which it was not by at least half, or twenty-nine years—Miss Earhart should have interpreted it to mean that fifty-eight years of flying led to *certain* death; half of that to an even-money chance of fatality; and one short year to a one in fifty-eight chance—the universally-mourned prophet herself having the misfortune to be the one in fifty-eight.

The standard of comparison must be one of *time*, so that a man can look at his watch and accurately figure his chances of being alive one hour, or one day, from now under various conditions. The medium of comparison utilized by these MERCURY reports in the past is the “normal hour”, a twenty-fourth part of an average day, including perhaps twenty minutes of sleep, five of eating, four or five more in an automobile—and so on. Using this normal hour as standard, we can proceed with a comparison of various methods of transportation.

II

Our survey establishes these facts:

1. The air passenger incurs 53 times the hourly danger of death of the Pullman car traveler.

2. His risk is 33 times that of the man in the day coach.

3. His risk is 8 times greater than the man who travels by automobile.

Translating the foregoing hourly comparisons into terms of hazard per journey, it is obvious that the automobile ratio is the only one low enough to be offset in any appreciable degree by the tremendous speed of the airplane. So long as trains continue to offer safety approximating the normal hour, passengers can spend their lives on them and still have a splendid chance of dying of old age. Specifically, the Twentieth Century Limited, probably America's best-known train, has for more than twenty-five years—how many more, no one is sure simply because there are no earlier statistics—operated at least one round trip a day without a single passenger fatality. Its total trips add up to enough train hours so that a continuing trainload of passengers, averaging 35 years of age at the start, would before now have lived out their normal lives and gone to their graves from diabetes or hardening of the arteries—but *not* as the result of accident.

Similarly, the safety-leading “Southerner” of American Airlines would by now have carried

a continuing plane-load of passengers 3.8 flying years without fatality, a commendable record, but as yet insufficient to alter the fact that the hourly danger of death in an airplane is 53 times as great as in a Pullman car.

The automobile comparison, however, works out much more favorably for the airplane. Starting with an hourly death-ratio of 8 to 1 against it, the modern air transport travels an average of 155 miles an hour, probably four times as much as automobiles can make over the road. Therefore, the airplane is now only twice as dangerous as the motor car *per journey*. And the air carriers may properly rejoice in the knowledge that American-operated air-lines are probably ten times safer than the average of all European air services.

Next, the seasonal hazards of flying are accurately presented herewith for the first time in the history of aviation. Our table runs from July 1931 to December 1937 — the monthly figures for 1938 are not yet available. But since the average passenger death-hazard for the period quoted is almost identical with the current figure, no injustice is done. The table relates to passengers in scheduled air transport only; each month is a

composite of like months; ratios represent the probability of meeting death in an hour of flight within that month when compared to normal ground occupations:

January:	103 to 1
February:	50 to 1
March:	65 to 1
April:	35 to 1
May:	17 to 1
June:	15 to 1
July:	12 to 1
August:	58 to 1
September:	6 to 1
October:	58 to 1
November:	20 to 1
December:	47 to 1

This information should enable those who can choose to time their aerial activities so as to have the least chance of smacking a stuffed cloud at 155 miles per hour and being hurled through the pearly gates with a half-eaten aerial box-lunch in one hand and a hunk of mountain in the other.

The facts relative to the comparative safety of various seats in the cabin of an airplane are meager, but there are cases on record where passengers in the rear seats escaped crashes fatal to those up front. That the hazard of flight is greater when flying over high mountain ranges is strongly indicated by the identity of the safety leaders. American Airlines formerly advertised itself as the low-altitude transcontinental route —

desisting because of pressure from within the industry — and Eastern Airlines and Pennsylvania-Central confine their operations to the eastern half of the country.

The hazard of air-carrier piloting is 20 per cent less than when last reported, and now stands at about 50 times the hourly death-hazard of normal ground occupations. That ratio, incidentally, is far and away the best achieved by any class of pilots. The other classes are noted briefly: pilots employed by "fixed-base" operators — aerial charter services, aerial photographers, etc. — 235 times normal; Army, Navy, and Marine Corps pilots, 166 times normal; amateurs, at least 600 times normal. There is a tremendous variation, however, between the best amateurs and the worst. The best are equal in ability to the airline pilots; the worst are merely men — and women — taking a slight aerial detour on their way to the cemetery.

Obviously, any hour includes the hazard of death from natural causes; and in all fairness, it has been included throughout the foregoing comparisons. Excluding it, as has been suggested by one misguided aeronautical enthusiast, results in figures which sound like telephone numbers, but are, nev-

ertheless, unvarnished truth. From the standpoint of accident only, an hour as an airline passenger is 150 times more likely to bring death than is a normal hour on the ground. It is 1500 times more deadly than an hour in a Pullman; and 82 times more lethal than a day coach. The air passenger has 3 chances of being killed outright to every 1 that a passenger on any kind of American railroad conveyance has of dislocating his shoulder or barking his shins in a train accident.

Contrary to the interpretation placed on them by the air publicity men, insurance rates now in effect are in accord with the adduced data: the annual limit of 100 hours of airline flying imposed on applicants for standard life-insurance policies merely establishes the fact that four full days in the air increases the hazard of death by 25 per cent for the entire year, which is nothing more than the maximum variation permitted by safe underwriting principles.

III

It is now fitting that we examine the credit side of the ledger. Speed is important in modern life, and human beings are apparently reconciled to the fact that each in-

crease brings increased danger. Aviation deserves commendation for reversing that process. While steadily boosting speeds and adding the hazards inherent in night and bad weather operations, the air carriers have managed to effect a moderate improvement in safety. Furthermore, with operating revenues frequently too low to finance the changes out of income, they have not hesitated to dig into capital for the purchase of new airplanes and improved technological adjuncts.

The power and efficiency of motors have been steadily increased. Full-feathering propellers check the windmilling of a disabled motor and reduce drag, thereby contributing to the safety of single-engined operation. Triple installations protect against failure of radio receivers. Automatic gyro-pilots reduce the pilot-fatigue inherent in instrument flying. Radio compasses offer the first positive method of fixing the position of an airplane flying blind.

Pilots present the finest combination of keen brains and superb physical condition ever assembled in one industry. They are triply checked — by two sets of weather experts and an experienced flight dispatcher — before each take-off. The competitive operating sched-

ules which formerly compelled them to push motors at ruinous speeds have been abandoned; and there is no longer any incentive for one pilot to “get through” simply to show up his competitor who has been grounded. One airline even insulates its pilots from romance, believing that the employment of male stewards rather than attractive stewardesses tends to keep the pilot’s mind on his work. Air traffic control is quite efficient: planes avoid collision by traveling in different directions at different altitudes and awaiting instructions to land at air terminals. Radio direction-finding ground stations and the absolute altimeter, registering altitude above the actual terrain, are in the offing; and finally, the newly established Civil Aeronautics Authority lends peace to the flying atmosphere formerly torn by conflicting authority.

Why, then, do airplanes still crash? Because human beings still make mistakes, weather is still weather, mechanical contrivances still fail, even metal airplanes burn, and, principally, because no one has repealed the law of gravity. To comprehend that clearly, it is necessary that we glance briefly at the laws governing human flight. The air will support objects heavier than itself only when com-

bined with sufficient speed to create "lift". The captain of a ship or the engineer of a train can slow down or stop in case of trouble, but the pilot of a plane can do no such thing. Any attempt to fly slower than about sixty miles an hour—in transport planes—results in sure disaster. Until the pilot can find a landing place, there is nothing he can do but keep on going, and hope for the best. If his power fails or his fuel runs out, he must immediately glide to a landing at express-train speed—on ground which he may not be able to see. Then a crash-board is apt to meet in a nice warm office and decide that he made a "mistake".

The safety devices so far installed are helpful, but in 1938 there was a bad tendency to place too much dependence in them. Radio transmitters are not carried in duplicate, as are receivers; the radio compass has a 180-degree ambiguity which can only be solved by complicated maneuvers; and static at times still renders all radio useless. Weather forecasting is spotty, and, combined with questionable dispatching, was in the background of at least one fatal crash. As indicated by the seasonal figures, Winter flying is far from being under control. Ice can form

on wings and control-surfaces faster than any de-icer so far contrived can eliminate it. It has been known to pile up at the rate of an inch a minute—and two inches is about all an airplane can stagger along with.

Lightning, which has caused fatal accidents abroad, has struck the airplanes of one American air carrier more than sixty times within a twelvemonth. The resultant damage, however, was in each case minor—fused metal, small holes in wings. Since this total of escapes is too great to attribute to luck, full credit should be accorded the designers and manufacturers who have made American commercial aircraft not only the fastest, but the sturdiest, in the world. They have not been able, however, to make planes fireproof. Two instances of fire in the air occurred during the year. One load of passengers en route from Montgomery, Alabama, to Atlanta in an Eastern Air Lines plane escaped as a result of quick thinking and marvelous piloting. Seven passengers and the crew of three in a United Air Lines plane died seeking an emergency landing near Cleveland after a broken cylinder had bathed the right wing in flames.

All in all, in this matter of im-

provements, the aviation industry has done well—but it can do much better. Blind, unreasoning fear of the effect of parachutes on revenue prevents the annual saving of many lives. Ignoring the fact that every steamship carries life boats and life preservers, the air carriers are convinced that the presence of parachutes on air transports will scare away passengers. They dodge the issue by claiming that passengers would become panicky and refuse to jump. So they might. But automatic parachutes, built into cabin chairs and controlled by the pilot, have passed the experimental stage. Admittedly, they would not save all the lives now lost in air crashes. They are of little use in flights over water; they are of doubtful value when flying over the desolate terrain encountered by the Alaskan and South American extensions of some American airlines, and no good at all when the pilot has no warning that he is in trouble. But not a year passes that one or more pilots do not have sufficient warning, this year's tragic examples being two: the United fire near

Cleveland and the TWA disaster near Fresno, California. The official government investigations proved that both pilots had ample time to save the lives of all passengers—if they had had parachutes.

The conclusions of this survey may be summed up as follows:

1. Flying is still considerably more hazardous than any other means of travel.
2. For anyone in a hurry, the United States offers the world's safest flying facilities, with several exceptionally safe routes.
3. The airline operators are improving planes and equipment to a measurable degree, and flying becomes a little safer with the passing years.
4. Air travel can be made somewhat less perilous in the immediate future at slight expense in schedule maintenance—that is, by canceling a larger percentage of bad-weather flights.
5. Parachutes must be added to airplane equipment eventually, simply because they will save lives. Why not now?

THE TRUTH ABOUT SOUTHERN COOKING

BY ISABELLE POST

ARE you one of that vast American contingent whose mouths water at any reference to good ole Southern Cooking? Do the strains of *Dixie* conjure up before your eyes visions of white-haired colonels and crinolined belles seated at a festive board groaning beneath mountains of delectable fried chicken, hot biscuits, and sweet-potato pie? Do pictures of corpulent negresses yclept Jemima cause your nostrils to quiver with the scent of incomparable delicacies prepared according to secret Southern formulae? If you are one of these—then alas for your fair dreams!

The truth of the matter is, to be brutally frank, that the South's over-publicized Epicureans subsist for the most part upon its three traditional M's—meat, meal, and molasses; that the meat is usually limited to a fat salt pork realistically termed sowbelly; and that these three foundation foods find their way from the raw to aristocratic Dixie palates via the type of cook who, when asked if she can feed

fifteen men, replies, "Yas suh, jes gimme de grease".

In fact, it was this unbalanced diet, more than Northern bullets, which lost the Civil War for the Confederates. Dysentery killed off the volunteers faster than new ones could be trained. Southern soldiers who penetrated into the North, or were taken prisoner, came back amazed at the superior Damyankee rations. And ever since then, those Southerners able to get away have migrated North in search of better grist, or have made periodic pilgrimages into territory where meals are not such challenges to gastronomic bravery. For undoubtedly dear ole Dixie is the land of pellagra, rickets, and the eternal bellyache.

The reasons for these frightful conditions in the Bicarbonate Belt are the only two possible ones—first the type of food available, and second, the manner in which the food is prepared. Bluntly speaking, the trouble lies in rank rations and still ranker cooking.

Take the question of rations.

Have you ever hunted for a good cut of meat down South? I searched despairingly for years, until a kindly butcher, whipped from his normal somnolence by my insistent wailing, explained to me that nowhere in the South is it possible to beg, borrow, or steal a first-rate cut of meat, since the prime cuts are shipped from the meat centers of the Middle West to the large cities of the North and East. Even in Texas, the big Southern beef-producing state, discriminating housewives buy from butchers advertising "Kansas City Beef". Texas beef, in general, is poorly fattened, and frequently veal and yearling are passed off as mature beef. A really good steak in Dixie is as hard to find as a good Republican — and infinitely tougher. And by the way, did you ever order lamb chops in a Dixie restaurant? If you did, you were probably astounded at their generous dimensions as well as at their faintly unfamiliar smell. No, the climate doesn't swell the animal; the chances are you were eating the South's common substitute for lamb — goat meat. Chickens are small and scrawny compared with those up North, which fact probably accounts for the genesis of Southern fried chicken — a foul system of covering the bird with a

thick layer of flour or cracker-meal before frying — otherwise there would be nothing to bite into. And, *mirabile dictu*, the best Virginia ham in the world is served in New York restaurants.

In the matter of fruits and vegetables, conditions are hardly better. Except during the short growing season, fresh ones are practically non-existent. The festive board is usually laden with greens fresh from the can. During the growing season, fresh foods are limited to those raised locally. Good sweet corn is scarcely known. The average Southerner, unaware of such delicacies as Stowell's Evergreen and Country Gentleman, stoically munches field corn in the milk stage and then passes the night in awful agony. Broccoli is unheard of. Oranges, brought in on trucks from Florida, are the sickly greenish kind, nine-tenths seeds and pulp and one-tenth bitter juice. I never tasted a good plum, cherry, or pear in Dixie. I never even saw a nectarine there. And for five years I searched in vain for a Mackintosh apple. In fact, the scarcity of truck foods all over the South once caused an acerbic visitor to remark that if there were ever another Civil War the Southerners could be scared out of their wits by a bombardment of green vegetables.

If meats are inferior and truck foods rare, then what besides canned stuff do the Dixie denizens live on? Well, among other things are certain staples that deserve mention as a tribute to Southern heroism. For instance, there is the universal dish of boiled okra, a fuzzy concoction oozing mucilage from every crevice. In the Gulf states, everything is served with grits, a grain whose name is onomatopoeic. Breakfast consists of unadulterated grits, or eggs with grits; luncheon is meat with grits; supper is fish with grits.

Then, there are the famous breads — corn-bread, spoon-bread, banana-bread, and other gelatinous masses of incredible specific gravity, which in the North would probably be used as ballast for ocean liners, but hardly as food. There are a limited number of Southern cooks who can turn out fairly creditable biscuits; but on the whole, if it is true as charged, that Dixie dwellers subsist on batter-bread and ancestors, most of us would prefer the ancestors as the more toothsome evil.

While the current program for the retirement of cotton land is encouraging the growth of the dairy industry, at the present time the average Southerner is scared stiff by most dairy products. The con-

noisseur's delight in the infinite variety of imported cheeses in Northern markets would amaze the South, where cheese runs the gamut from American to Cream. Fresh sweet butter as we know it is unknown in the South, and even the packaged, salted variety is found only on the tables of the better class. The poorer families use a substitute made of cottonseed oil.

Last but not least, there is Southern ice cream, which is a sorry apology for the real thing. Even barring the synthetic fruit flavors, all Southern ice cream undergoes a unique blowing-up process whereby large quantities of air are injected into it, so that a normal person can put away a pint of the stuff, providing any normal person would care to continue after the first taste.

II

Meager and unsatisfactory as are the ingredients of Southern food, the preparation renders them even worse. True, tradition has exalted the fat mammy of the ante-bellum kitchens — and who am I to cast aspersions on one so securely enshrined? — but it is remarkable that, Mendel's law to the contrary notwithstanding, no whit of Mammy's talents was passed down to

her descendants. Evidently those celebrated secret recipes have been so successfully concealed that not even the South can find them. Mammy's granddaughter, for the princely sum of three dollars a week, rules the kitchen today, and despite her wide, white smile and her general air of well-being, she is the world's worst cook.

Nor is the word "cook" appropriate in any discussion of Southern victuals. Cooking in Dixie means frying. Many a home I know boasts as its sole culinary equipment an assortment of frying pans — and little else. Everything fryable is fried, as well as many foods that are not. All meats, poultry, and fish, are consigned to swim endlessly in deep pools of smoky, smelly grease until Mammy bestirs herself to rescue them, by which time they are brown, shrunken, and oozing oil all over. The subtler and healthier flavors emanating from tender roast chicken or beef are as yet undiscovered by the Colonel and his Lady. Even innocent fruits are coated with egg and cracker-meal and sentenced to the grease ponds for their baptism. Fried apples and pineapple are Southern staples. I used to wonder what Southern ladies did with the roasting compartments of their stoves until a little private sleuthing

revealed their purpose — the storing of the frying pans.

Yet even in Dixie, some foods staunchly refuse to swerve from the path for which Nature destined them. What of them? What, for example, of the simple string-bean and the carrot? Strict regard for the truth compels me to state that I never heard of fried carrots or string-beans in Dixie, although I confess I didn't cover every kitchen. Squash, corn, and cabbage are fried, but the string-bean and carrot, as far as I know, have escaped. Instead, they are put into a pot filled to the brim with water and left to boil until the water has completely evaporated — for custom decrees that a vegetable isn't ready until it has shrunk to one fourth its original size, lost its natural color, and absorbed the odor of the salt-pork which has been thrown in to give the food a degree of taste. And it is nothing short of a miracle that, despite the vast quantities of water used, the cooked vegetables are invariably scorched.

Naturally, something must be done to render this indigestible and tasteless diet as appetizing as possible. Something *is* done — the obvious something. The food is spiced and flavored within an inch of its life, not to mention the life of its consumer. Salt and pepper are applied

torrentially during the cooking process, and what natural flavor may still persist is drowned at the table in floods of the hottest homemade gravies and sauces, and the spiciest of manufactured condiments. I defy any uninitiated foreigner to swallow three mouthfuls of Southern soup, for example, without burning the roof of his mouth.

Just as frying and boiling and seasoning are done to extremes, desserts are sweet to extreme; puddings are deluged with cloying chocolate, lemon, and vanilla sauces; biscuits drip with honey; gingerbread, one of the few fairly satisfactory foods, is topped by gummy marshmallow sauce. Ask a Frenchman sometime what he would think of a chef who served *pommes de terre* covered with sugar; and when he laughs incredulously, tell him that one of the South's proudest concoctions is candied sweet potatoes.

But if the Southerner himself must subsist on such rations, consider the plight of the visitor in search of an adequate restaurant. He can travel from Richmond to El Paso, from Memphis to Miami, without finding a café or hotel dining-room sufficiently good to make him want to go back for another meal. New Orleans, of course,

has several good French restaurants, but then New Orleans is more old-world than Southern. Most eating places in the land of cotton are little more than glorified hot dog and barbecue stands, operated by Greeks who have combined their own limited notions of palatable cooking with the worst Southern ideas. The result is frequently ptomaine—a very common Dixie complaint. Service is slow, noisy, and often insolent. The coffee is muddy and bitter. Flies infest all restaurants, and the cockroaches usually to be seen scurrying across the floor indicate that the kitchens have their quota of rats.

Small wonder, then, that the South is the country's best market for liver pills, stomach cures, and all other digestive panaceas. *De gustibus non disputandum est*; but you can't convince me that it is the climate that grows ulcers on the linings of so many Southern stomachs, or that dyspepsia is inherited along with the portrait of Grandpappy in his Confederate uniform.

Nor can you blame Dixielanders for drinking anything alcoholic from anti-freeze to tarantula juice. After all, the food must be made palatable somehow!

STATE MEDICINE, NAVY STYLE

ANONYMOUS

ACCORDING to one prominent group of Uplifters, many millions of ailing Americans are crushed between the upper millstone of high medical costs and the nether of their own restricted ability to pay. To correct this situation, the argument runs, it is only necessary to inaugurate an experimental program of State Medicine, and immediately its obvious benefits will be adopted by all mankind. There is, however, no need for such experimentation. State Medicine, in tangible form, exists today in many sections of the United States and has so existed for years. I refer to the Naval Hospitals staffed and maintained by the Federal government.

Here are examples of medical Utopia: doctors without material cares and without prohibitive fees, yet not harassed by starvation wages and unpaid bills; hospitals supported entirely by public funds, caring for patients who receive treatment for a modest payment, well within their means. As a naval officer, I have been a patient in

many such institutions, and thus am competent to file an unprejudiced report on the lesson they teach as guinea pigs of socialized medicine. Come with me, then, into a typical Naval Hospital as a patient in Sick Officers' Quarters, commonly called S. O. Q.

Let us assume that you are not acutely sick; that you are "ambulant", *i.e.*, able to walk. There are various rumblings in your innards at regular intervals, you do not relish your vittles, you have spells of vertigo, you have pains here and there. To the medicos who welcome you, therefore, you present no immediate problem. You sail into the hospital under your own power, a book in one hand and a suitcase in the other. That slight pallor, those dark eye circles, may well be the result of too many martinis the night before. You have not been rushed in through the gate on a stretcher, gushing gore and emitting feeble, morphia-dulled moans of pain.

Your first and lasting impression of this palace of healing is of an

overwhelming indifference. I have been in many hospitals, civilian as well as naval. In the good civilian ones, I have scarcely had time to yank off my pants before things began to happen. Cold and impersonal though they were, efficient people were sticking me here, listening to me there, jotting down my symptoms. Men pay good money for rooms in a civilian hospital. They begrudge the time spent away from their business, which is costing them more money. Civilian doctors realize this, and will see to it that three days suffice for a complete medical history, preliminary physical examination, a gastro-intestinal series, gall-bladder test, stomach fluoroscope, and fractional analysis, plus any other attention deemed necessary.

In a naval hospital, however, you will in all likelihood be a patient for a week or more before anything at all is done to or for you. The ruling principle is that of the old Spanish proverb, "The squeaking wheel gets the grease". In other words, the medicos figure that if your pains are bad enough, you will yell. The patient pays only for his food, which he would have to pay for anyway on board ship. His work on the ship is now being done by somebody else. So what's all the shooting about? As the

Chinese say, "While being raped, relax".

This hospital is organized on the separate clinic system. After some days of inactivity, you pester the chief nurse, a bluff old battle-axe, into giving you a few clinic examination slips. Then you plod around to eye, ear, nose and throat, to dental clinic, genito-urinary and prostate, blood and Kahn tests, sinus, etc. The realization grows that you will never get out of the damned place unless the wheels are kept moving, so you get on the good side of Battle-Axe, tell her dirty stories, and plead for clinic slips like a debutante for gin.

Navy doctors are at once disappointed if you have not got either syphilis or gonorrhea. Each of these so-called social diseases presents a clear clinical picture. There's no nonsense about them; the treatment is so standardized that from the doctor's viewpoint the case is just a short-range battle practice. Also the patient is placed at a disadvantage; he can't laugh it off and must be humbly grateful for any efforts toward a cure.

The clinic visits grind slowly on. Much depends upon the day of the week. On Monday, all hands are recovering from the week-end. Tuesday is the one full working day. Wednesday morning is "ladies

day", when the wives engulf everything, dragging kids or carrying babies. Wednesday afternoon is a half-holiday. Thursday is "field day", devoted to scrubbing up for inspection. Friday is the awe-inspiring Inspection Day. Saturday and Sunday are holidays. So, if you must get sick, pick a Tuesday, because at any other time it's just too damned bad.

II

Continuing with our tests, we reach the end of them in about three weeks. Three days should have been sufficient. Now comes the crux of the whole affair—the diagnosis. The doctor who has your case is supposed to weigh the evidence and decide what disease, if any, you have. Now the diagnostician in a good civilian hospital is a doctor of long experience and mature judgment. In a naval hospital he probably is far from that. His medical development has been uneven. He has spent years on board ship, where his experience has been confined to gonorrhea, syphilis, colds, sprained ankles, and bad hangovers. Therefore, beware your diagnosis; it may be right or it may be wrong. The wise naval officer, when ill, obtains a week's leave, visits a good civilian clinic,

and gets an accurate diagnosis. Then he goes to a naval hospital and trusts to God he can wangle his treatment along the lines laid down by his civilian specialist.

There are a few good Navy doctors, but only a few. They suffer mainly from lack of the competitive stimulation; they are under no compulsion to please their patients or even to cure them. A man dies—and so what? It is easy to prove that the catastrophe was unavoidable. This big ex-athlete has lost fifty pounds, is weak as a cat, has a high white-cell count, a seventy-five-per-cent retention in stomach contents. While the diagnosis argument goes on, a duodenal ulcer penetrates. They operate, and do an ulcer repair and a gastroenterostomy at the same time. The patient rallies, then slips into intestinal paralysis and dies. Well, how can you be sure whether he was killed by too much surgery, by poor technique, or by bad luck?

Civilian doctors who lose too many patients soon find difficulty in paying their grocery bills. Line officers in the Navy who run ships aground are court-martialed and passed over for promotion. But if a Navy doctor loses cases, it's all in the day's work.

Once having wrested a diagnosis from your medical boss, it is dis-

tinctly the course of wisdom to look after your own routine with the greatest care. Once the treatment order is put down in the nurse's black book, it stays there. If for your ills there is prescribed an arsenical preparation which you know must cease at the end of twenty doses to avoid a toxic poisoning, check the capsules off on your calendar and stop it yourself at the proper time. The stuff, of course, will keep coming in. And narcotics are easy to get. Put up a yell about a pain in your innards and a corps man will soon arrive with a morphia syringe.

There is for three ward-floors but one nurse, who is assisted by hospital corpsmen, newly enlisted. These lads are interested principally in what kind of a time they expect to have at the Beach on their next night off. The best way to ingratiate yourself with them and obtain your medicine at the proper time, is to slip each one a carton of cigarettes every week. The main goal for the nurse and her corpsmen is not, as you might think, to insure the well-being of the patients, but to make a good showing at the coming Friday-morning inspection. Everybody may be sick as hell, but if the doorknobs are shined and the window sills cleaned, the week is a success.

At 10 o'clock on Friday, the Commanding Officer and his entourage start their rounds. The Captain is a nice old fellow, interested mainly in where he is going to live next year after he retires. He trails solemnly in and out of room after room, asking each occupant perfunctorily how he feels, but looking at the floor to see if there is dust under the rug. The Chief of Medicine tags along, thinking mostly of his own ailing gall bladder, which he knows must soon be carved out by the saturnine Chief of Surgery. The Surgery Chief is wondering whether tennis is really good for him at his age, and is inclined to believe he had best stick to his hobby of watch-repairing, which he dabbles in to keep his manual dexterity.

But, you ask, have the patients no rights? Isn't this a free country? Isn't tyranny dead? Of course! In theory you can write official complaining letters; you can march into the Commanding Officer's office and explain that your doctor is a sap. *You* can do it; I won't. And the reason I won't is very simple: I want to get well. My doctor would tell the Captain that I am a neurotic — that everything is being done for me that is possible or desirable, and that I am probably not really sick anyway. The next

Selection Board would read in my medical record: "This officer has a tendency towards neurosis and hypochondria and, while not definitely unstable, is subject to some mental unreliability." Would I be selected for promotion? You answer that one.

III

So you still think that a stay in this Naval Hospital is a ride on the financial gravy train? No doctors' fees to pay; no bills for hospital room, laboratory, anaesthesia, or medicines. Well, you pay little (only for your food); but if you really want to get well, you lose. In a civilian hospital, the medical staff recognizes your desire to get well quickly; in a naval hospital you are beaten down by the feeling that such things as are done are done as a favor and not as a right. Try to tell the doctors your symptoms, how you feel, your nameless terrors. They listen with but half an ear, with the air of being interrupted in important pursuits. So, finally, to hell with it, and to the perfunctory, "How are you feeling today?", you reply, "About the same", and let it go.

Observe, then, at your leisure, the guinea pig of that State Medicine which many assert will solve

all medical problems. The true believer will assure you that this is medical paradise: doctors relieved of material worry, pursuing their calm and healing way, their study and research, and balancing your pros and cons without rancor or bombast; patients no longer haunted by fears of the financial reckoning soon to come. Don't believe it!

Man is mortal; man is frail. It may be that some fine day we shall all work for the pure joy of effort, that we shall strive and struggle with only the prod of the desire for efficient achievement. But that day is not yet. If I have to have a saw-bones look me over, give me one who has some slight interest in getting me back into the pink. Put ten doctors—or ten men of any profession—in one organization, pay them all approximately the same, make it difficult if not impossible for any one to get fired. In a month, two are doing all the work, while the others play golf.

Once on a navy ship a little seaman appeared with some not-too-serious ailment. The hard-boiled medico snorted:

"Young man, if I were a doctor in civilian life, would you come to me with this trivial complaint?"

"No", said the gob thoughtfully. "No—I'd send for you."

Believe me, it is better that way.

THE STEEL-STRIKE WAR

BY STEWART H. HOLBROOK

THE MAN on the Smithfield Street Bridge over the Monongahela River didn't see much to interest him until just before dawn. He had watched there all night, walking back and forth, now in solid darkness, now in lurid light as some Bessemer went roaring into blow and revealed Pittsburgh to be quiet and asleep. It had been a rather dull night.

But now, in the murky half-light before dawn, at a quarter past three, the watching man sighted a procession coming up the river. It was a flotilla of two tugs and two scows. In the lead was the *Little Bill*, towing the *Iron Mountain*. Close behind, the *Tide* towing the *Monongahela*. The man recognized the tugs easily; he knew they were of the Carnegie Steel Company's river fleet. The names of the scows were familiar, but not their shapes; if they were the same ungainly tubs which were ordinarily used for moving steel rails, then monkey-work had been performed on them. They looked less like rail scows than

like ships of war. Instead of open vessels, their holds were now enclosed with rugged woodwork, or something even more resistant.

The man on the bridge couldn't know what the scows contained, but he must have felt that they contained no good. What the man's name was is lost to history, but what he did next is well known: he hurried from the bridge into drowsy Pittsburgh, and at the nearest telegraph station he sent an eight-word message addressed to Hugh O'Donnell, Homestead, Pennsylvania:

WATCH RIVER TWO STEAMERS
WITH SCOWS LEFT HERE

Neither the watcher on the bridge nor Hugh O'Donnell knew what the two strangely-covered scows contained. In them were an even three hundred well-armed fellows who were soon only too well known as "the Pinkerton Men". They had been recruited from the ranks of ex-convicts and other unemployed of Chicago and New York by Mr. Pinkerton's National

Detective Agency. Assembled at nearby Youngstown, Ohio, they had been transported by rail to a point below Pittsburgh, and were now being towed through the night to Homestead, eight miles above Pittsburgh, where the biggest plant in America made steel for all the world. Only the plant wasn't making any steel just then. It had been closed down five days before by Henry C. Frick, who was Andrew Carnegie's general manager. Mr. Frick didn't like unions and he had determined to smash that of the steel workers in his plant. Mr. Carnegie didn't like unions any better than Mr. Frick did, but he had long since enjoyed posing as The Workingman's Friend, so he went to hide in Scotland, leaving Mr. Frick to do the smashing.

Henry C. Frick posed as nobody's friend, and the steel he made at Homestead was no tougher than Frick himself. When the Amalgamated Association of Iron & Steel Workers had refused his proffered scale of wage reductions, Frick shut down the plant and built a high fence around it—a fence with small holes bored through it, just about right for a Winchester barrel.

By the time the big fence was completed, the steel workers had

become alarmed at the thought of strike-breakers. They placed pickets all around the plant. Other pickets watched roads leading into Homestead. Both town and steelworks were actually in the hands of the strikers. But before all this happened, Mr. Frick had asked Pinkerton to send "three hundred watchmen" to Homestead. They were almost there now.

II

The flotilla of trouble steamed slowly up the dirty yellow water of the Monongahela. The two scows really were more like *Merrimacs* than rail boats. Their tops were covered with staunch plank-ing; inside, they had been specially fitted for the job in hand—sheets of armor plate, such as Mr. Carnegie made for the U. S. Navy, lined the top and sides. One of these men-of-war had been rigged up as an eating place, the other as a bunkhouse. But the Pinkerton Men weren't to do any sleeping and not much eating.

At a lock below Homestead, the tug *Tide* dropped out because of engine trouble, and the *Little Bill* took both scows in tow. Just before the armada came abreast of Homestead, a long sinister moan roused the sleeping town. It came

from the whistle of the steam plant at the steelworks, blown by Hugh O'Donnell, chief of the strikers' forces. He had just received the message sent by the man on the Smithfield Street Bridge in Pittsburgh. It was 4:25 in the morning of July 6, 1892. It was to be quite a day.

No Paul Revere roused a countryside quicker than that Homestead blast. The horrible stark town back of the steel mills leaped to sudden life. Shouts and yells came from the black, clap-boarded shacks huddled close to the river, and doors banged on the slightly-less-grimy houses that clung to the bare steep hills that rose quickly from the river bank. Out from a wharf darted the small *Edna*, a launch chartered by the strikers for a patrol boat. The *Edna* circled the *Little Bill* and its ominous tow, hailing her. There was no answer. The tug steamed straight for the landing dock inside the steel plant's fence. Again the *Edna* circled, while its crew shouted to know who and what was this ark of a cargo. By now, the nearby shore was alive with figures of running men, many of them carrying rifles. All was ready.

The *Little Bill* steamed straight to the water entrance of the big plant, silent now inside its hul-

ing grime. A gangplank was put out—and somebody's nervous forefinger pulled the trigger of a rifle that was loaded and went off promptly. Whose finger it was is not known and, although Congressmen later argued about it for weeks, it doesn't matter. Here was a naval force of three hundred armed men who were being paid \$1500 a day to take charge of a steel plant and guard it. And here was a land force of four thousand men, many of them armed, who believed their jobs, their very existence, were at stake. The only sure thing at such times is that somebody *will* pull the trigger of a gun.

All hell broke loose immediately. Captain Hinde, in command of the Pinkerton Men, went down in a welter of blood on the deck of the *Iron Mountain*, and the dry, sinister crackle of rifle-fire rattled all along the shore. Four strikers were seen to throw up their hands and go down. The Pinkerton Men were hopelessly outnumbered, and they did the only thing they could. They remained in their armored scows, taking pot shots through portholes at any striker who exposed himself. During a lull, the *Little Bill* hurriedly took aboard several badly-wounded Pinkertons and backed out into the river, gunfire from the shore raking her full

length. She steamed away to Braddock hospital with her bloody cargo.

The whistle and shooting had aroused the workers at the Carrie Furnaces on the north side of the river. In mid-morning, watchers on the Homestead side saw a puff of smoke arise from near the furnaces, and soon they heard the scream of a cannon ball. It was a poor cannon and a poor ball, both of them cast for a war thirty years gone and ever since used to decorate the lawn of the GAR Hall in Braddock. But they tore a ragged hole in the side of the *Monongahela*. The Homestead army cheered loud but not long. A second shot from the cannon went too far to hit a scow and exactly far enough to shear-off clean the head of young Silas Wain, one of the strikers, who was crouching in the steel plant's yard. It was a frightful death, in full view of the mightiest audience ever to watch death on the Monongahela. It mattered not that it was strikers' cannon that had killed a striker. There in two pieces lay the quivering form of one who would have been alive except for the damnable Pinkerton Men. The Homestead fighters and watchers went into a murderous frenzy.

From the Grand Army Hall in

Homestead, men and women pulled still another old field-piece of '65. They wheeled it to the pumping station, just above where the embattled scows were moored. They poured powder down the ancient's throat, followed the powder with a cast-iron pill that may have been meant for Richmond, and rammed it home with old newspapers. A fuse burned close and the ancient roared fire—it was good drama but not practicable war. The shot went wild, away over into the middle of the river. Try as they would, the artillerymen could not depress the gun's muzzle enough to hit the scows, and it was abandoned.

Not the battle, though. Fresh ammunition and arms had arrived from Pittsburgh for the strikers and they swarmed toward the scows from three sides. They hadn't yet learned the strategy of siege warfare, and the lesson was terrible in its cost. The boys on shore hadn't learned that a fortress isn't to be taken head-on by infantry alone. Peter Farris was running forward with a bright new Marlin in his hands when a porthole flame breathed at him. A watcher said Peter Farris whirled full around, threw his Marlin high in the air, and went down in a heap. A moment later, Harris Striegel kneeled

to take aim at a porthole. The porthole flared briefly and the top of Striegel's head spattered a pile of pig-iron behind him. A witness wondered if the iron had been made in Number Two Blast, where Striegel had worked for so long. . . . This kind of battle wouldn't do. The strikers changed their tactics. Working warily they piled iron pigs to make breastworks that no rifle bullet could penetrate. For the protection of sharpshooters they brought out huge ingots of steel. And meanwhile new strategy was afoot.

Moored in the river at the up-end of the steel plant was a small raft of lumber. Strong hands rolled a barrel of oil from plant to raft and an ax swung to break the head. The green ooze poured out over raft and water. A hunk of burning waste was thrown into its middle, while men with long tapping-irons gave the flaming raft a push in the right direction. With flames shooting sixty feet into the air, the barge of fire slowly moved down-stream toward the hapless scows, cheered on by more voices than Homestead had ever heard. For a moment, it seemed to be the answer to the siege. Making a heat that could be felt even on the streets of the town, the raft moved slowly, ruthlessly, down toward

the scows. Then it stuck on something — stuck, and burned itself out to the groans of the strikers and the 15,000 sympathizers who watched from the bare, open hills.

"Then," said Myron Stowell, who saw it, "many of the strikers could be seen dragging their bodies like snakes along the ground inside the plant yard." They were working their way toward an exposed flatcar that stood on a railroad spur inside the plant. The spur of track, as everyone could see, led directly down to the wharf where the scows were moored. Moving the flatcar a bit, to get it behind a pile of pig-iron, the men quickly loaded it with barrels of oil and bundles of waste. A torch was applied. Up leaped the flames as a man released the hand-brakes. Fifty sweating bodies heaved hard at the car. It moved, rolled, and was away down the slight incline to the wharf. Down the car went, gathering speed as it approached the water. But it never got there. A spread rail, or something, sent it reeling off the track into the sand along shore, to burn futilely to the accompaniment of curses in twenty-two languages.

Now the deep-throated voice of the Homestead whistle warned the strikers that some new danger was

present. It was the *Little Bill*, back from her trip to Braddock. What the *Little Bill* meant to do no striker or Pinkerton ever knew. Before she was little more than in mid-stream a long rattle of gunfire broke out from behind the pig-iron and ingot breastworks. In a moment there wasn't a pane of glass in her pilot house, and bullets ripped long neat splinters in her decks and side. The pilot lay on the floor and steered as best he could, which wasn't very good. The *Little Bill* steamed around in great drunken arcs, careening this way and that, while her smoke-stack was turned into a sieve and her sides and lifeboat broke out from a great pox of lead bullets. But the pilot managed to keep her off the Homestead shore, and presently she got out of range and steamed fast for Pittsburgh.

It was hell all around the two scows that day. It must have been no less inside. More than a hundred Pinkertons had been struck by bullets; two lay dead. The bottom decks were slippery with blood. One Pinkerton, crazed with pain, leaped from the *Iron Mountain* to drown in the river. It was late afternoon when a pike-pole with a fairly white shirt on its end was poked up from the scow near shore. The shirt was promptly torn

and the slim pole shattered by gunfire from the pig-iron fort.

"We gotta kill them Pinks¹, every one!" was the shout that went up and down the iron and steel breastworks. Old John Monroe remembers it well today, for he got a bullet in his left leg just then, a Pinkerton bullet that came along as he ran for the Carnegie pump-house to help unpack some dynamite. John Monroe isn't sure, but he thinks the giant blasting powder was brought into Homestead from nearby coal mines. Anyway, there was a lot of it, and a lot of boxes of little brass caps, and roll upon roll of dirty white fuse. In 1892 many a steel worker had started life in the coal mines and was more familiar with blasting powder than with guns. *This* was simple as breathing. The Homestead boys got out their knives, made holes for the caps in the brown sticks, bit the caps with their teeth to hold them firmly to the fuse, then rammed them into the powder. A man ran out of the pump-house, a bundle of sticks with a smoking tail in his hand. He waited a moment, watching the fuse, while the bullets of the Pinkerton Men zipped past him. Then he heaved.

¹ Non-English-speaking strikers corrupted this to "Fink", and *fink* has become a word calling for a smile — if you don't mean it.

A spume of water shot up close to the scows. When it fell, watchers could see a long jagged hole just above the water-line of the *Monongahela*. Another bundle of death fell smoking to the top deck and puffed fitfully. Men prayed to God it would explode. It did. It went up with a roar that sent planks flying in every direction. It made a hole large enough for men on shore to see human forms inside the scow.

The dynamiters continued. Another mob of men, moved by a new idea, ran uptown, stormed the Homestead fire-ball and came tearing down to the plant, yelling like all the devils in hell and dragging a hose-carriage behind them. One of the big Carnegie water tanks was drawn off and into the tank a hundred men poured oil, barrels of it, rolling them upward on inclined planks. Soon they were flushing oil from the hose onto the surface of the river. It swirled sluggishly, then spread out to make gaudy colors all around the two scows. Bundles of flaming waste were thrown onto the oil. It burned bluishly in spots for a few moments, then went out. The scows weren't even scorched.

While the hose-cart attack was going forward, President William Weihe of the steelworkers' union

tried to address several hundred strikers back of the breastworks. Big Bill, seven feet tall and known as The Giant Puddler, was a commanding personality. But there was no commanding this mob. What he attempted to say was drowned in shouts for more, bigger, and worse war on the Pinkertons.

The men at the pump-house were dynamiting the scows into another try for truce. Again the pike-hole with a frayed white shirt on it went up. It was close to nine o'clock in the evening. This time Hugh O'Donnell, he who had received the telegram sent by the man on the Smithfield Street Bridge, walked unarmed down the embankment to the scows. He and the Pinkertons parleyed. They asked only to be given safe conduct out of town. O'Donnell, who was an honest and an earnest man, but who must have been unduly optimistic, agreed. He appointed a guard of picked men, who first made sure the Pinkertons had no arms. Then the doomed men were formed into double file and marched uptown. The plan was to escort them four blocks to an old skating rink where they would remain under guard until they could safely be moved out of town.

Had Homestead been deserted, it

might have worked. Instead, the town swarmed with probably 20,000 persons, most of them hostile to these outlanders. It was a terrible gauntlet, and no credit to Labor. The crowd surged at the Pinks all along the four blocks. Women clawed at them, screaming as only women can. One harridan ran the sharp end of an umbrella into a Pinkerton man's eye. It stuck there and he had to pull it out himself. Boys threw stones and all manner of filth. Infuriated men hauled Pinkertons from the ranks and beat them unmercifully, clubbing, kicking, gouging. Sadistic obscenities were performed on the hapless strangers. Forty-odd of them did not finish the march at all; they had to be dragged and carried, some mere pulps of flesh, to the skating-rink guardhouse.

Down at the boat landing a mob ransacked the scows, then fired them, pouring oil into the holds. Flames spread to the pump-house, and the blaze rose higher than the stacks of the steel works. It all made a lurid and fitting end for what was America's greatest industrial battle. Nineteen men were either dead or about to be. The seriously wounded numbered 163.

By now the press had heard about Homestead. Newspapermen were pouring in from Chicago,

New York, everywhere. For another five days the strikers ruled the town—ruled it, newspapermen said, with surprisingly good order. State troops moved in on July 12 and took charge. The Battle of Homestead was over—almost. One piece of violence remained. It happened eight miles away in Pittsburgh and, for the strikers, it was a greater tragedy than anything that had taken place during those seething hours of July 6.

III

When the Homestead smoke had cleared, public opinion may not have been wholeheartedly with the strikers, but it was wholeheartedly against Henry C. Frick and the Carnegie Steel Company. The man and the company were damned publicly by press and pulpit. In time, had it not been for this last piece of idiotic violence, public opinion might well have supported the iron and steelworkers' union.

On July 23, then, Henry C. Frick sat in his office, the office of the general manager of the Carnegie Steel Company, in the Hussey Building, in Pittsburgh. Suddenly, a slight, dark young man entered the room. "Frick . . .", he began. Then he pulled a revolver from his

pocket, aimed it at the steelmaster's head, and fired. Blood poured out of Frick's neck and ran down over his well-trimmed beard as he staggered to his feet. The young man fired again. The bullet took off part of Frick's left ear. Attendants came running to grab the killer. He tore partly away, a knife in his hand, stabbing Frick viciously.

They had the assassin collared now. Frick was all bloody, but game. "Let me," he said to his rescuers, "look at his face." He pointed to the fellow's mouth. "What is he chewing on?" Frick asked. They choked the man and took a small capsule from his mouth. The young man said his name was Alexander Berkman. The melodramatic capsule, he said, contained enough "fulminide of mercury to blow us all into bits". They put Anarchist Berkman away in the pen for twenty-two years. He served fifteen, emerging to appear briefly in the limelight in 1917 when he and Emma Goldman were deported to Russia.

Berkman was no steelworker. He had no connection with Homestead nor its strikers; they had never heard of him. He had come alone from New York to commit this piece of murderous exhibitionism. The confused public put him

down as one of the "Homestead agitators". His one contribution served to set the people against unionism in all its forms. It also gave the steelmasters determination to run their mines and mills as they damn well pleased.

Henry Frick didn't die from the bullets and knife wounds. He was too tough for that. With showmanship that matched his nerve, he remained in his office until quitting time. Doctors came and Frick would take no anesthetic. "I can help you probe better for the bullet without it," he said. Once bandaged, he was propped up in his chair with pillows and there he stayed, dictating and signing letters until the day's work was done. The public cheered a brave man.

That night from a bed in his Homestead mansion, Frick gave out a statement for the press. "I do not think I shall die," he said, "but whether I do or not, the Carnegie company will pursue the same policy and it will win."

Henry Frick was correct. Not for forty-five years did a steelworkers' union amount to anything. In the interval, many a blast-furnace and rolling-mill man cursed, not Frick, but Berkman. They often said they wished Berkman had chewed on that capsule before he got to Frick's office.

JEFFERSON: A SLIPPERY POLITICIAN

BY NATHAN SCHACHNER

TODAY all parties quote Thomas Jefferson in their own behalf, much as the Devil quoted Scripture on occasion. Once the *bête noire* of the conservatives and the darling of the radicals, the past several years have developed a remarkable sea-change in the attitude of the politicians toward Jefferson. The Rooseveltians now proclaim him the first New Dealer; the Republicans find infinite satisfaction in his denunciation of centralized powers as tyranny; the socialists remember the stock phrase that "all men are created equal"; and the communists cite with glee his pious belief in the necessity of a revolution at least once every generation. Only the fascists are yet to be heard from.

For this curious catholicity of quotation there is ample justification. Jefferson was the most inconsistent of men. Juicy tit-bits and apt phrases can be combed from his writings to cover almost any contingency. He preached perfect revolutionary theory, and acted

like a staunch conservative on achieving power. With unholy vigor he lambasted the policies of the Federalists—pre-election—and continued those same policies almost *in toto*—post-election. With every weapon at his command, he excoriated and pursued those who attempted to apply too literally the very doctrines he had preached for many a year. It is no wonder that Jefferson is now all things to all men!

An examination of his utterances, both public and private, will disclose the reasons for the facility with which it is possible to quote the gentleman on all sides of any controversy. Take his celebrated love of mankind: every schoolboy knows about it. "All men are created equal", exclaimed the Declaration of Independence. The "common people", he pontificated on another occasion, were the safest and most virtuous depository of power; unceasingly he insisted that the masses knew better than all the philosophers what was right and beneficial for the progress and

happiness of mankind. But Jefferson had a positive hatred of this same proletariat. When he spoke in large accents of humanity—the people—he meant only the tillers of the soil, the planters who themselves constituted an aristocracy. He did *not* include the factory hands, the artisans, the mechanics who inhabited the cities. He wrote:

I consider the class of artificers as the panders of vice, and the instruments by which the liberties of a country are generally overturned. . . . The mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government, as sores do to the strength of the human body.

Even virtue is the sole possession of the farmer:

Corruption of morals in the mass of cultivators is a phenomenon of which no age nor nation has furnished an example. It is the mark set on those, who, not looking up to heaven, to their own soil and industry, as does the husbandman, for their subsistence, depend for it on casualties and caprice of customers. Dependence begets subservience and venality, suffocates the germ of virtue, and prepares fit tools for the designs of ambition.

Who has not heard of Jefferson, the apostle of States' Rights, the bitter opponent of centralization in government? Curiously enough, in the pre-Rooseveltian era, it was the Democrats who hailed the

noble apostle as their own; but now, by a flipflop not unknown to politicians, the Republicans have clasped him to their bosoms. The Kentucky Resolutions, written anonymously, defied the Federal Government in ringing terms. From the housetops it was shouted:

that the several States composing the United States of America are not united on the principle of unlimited submission to their general Government . . . that the Government created by this compact was not made exclusive or final judge of the extent of the powers delegated to itself . . . that each party has an equal right to judge for itself, as well of infractions as of the mode and measure of redress.

In other words, the Doctrine of Nullification, which was later tried out in blood and tears on a grandiose scale. But the chameleon Jefferson also gave vent to other and directly-contradictory utterances—and this was during the period of the Confederation, when avowedly the bonds that held the States together were considerably looser than under the Constitution. *Then* this jewel of consistency decided that

when any one State in the American Union refuses obedience to the Confederation by which they have bound themselves, the rest have a natural right to compel them to obedience.

And even more bellicosely:

There will never be money in the treasury till the confederacy shows its teeth. The States must see the rod; perhaps it must be felt by one of them.

States' Rights was an excellent rallying cry when the hated Federalists were in control of the government; but it was soft-pedaled when the worthy Jefferson himself entered office. And what could be a greater infringement of the rights of the various States, a more drastic and ruthless interference with the business and property of every merchant from Savannah to Portland Harbor, than the Embargo Act? Don't take my word for it. Read Albert Jay Nock, a friendly biographer, on this measure. It was, he says,

the most arbitrary, inquisitorial, and confiscatory measure formulated in American legislation up to the period of the Civil War.

II

Jefferson, whom everyone knows as the friend of man, the stern objector to the Alien Law on the high ground that it barred the oppressed of all nations who sought an asylum on these hospitable shores, nevertheless had this to say on another occasion concerning the admission of foreigners:

They will bring with them the principles of the governments they leave, imbibed in their early youth; or, if able to throw them off, it will be in exchange for an unbounded licentiousness, passing, as is usual, from one extreme to another. . . . In proportion to their numbers, they will share with us the legislation. They will infuse into it their spirit, warp and bias its directions, and render it a heterogeneous, incoherent, distracted mass.

But surely when it came to such a broad, fundamental right as the freedom of the press, Jefferson did not waver. On this subject he maintained in well-known accents:

I am for freedom of the press, and against all violations of the Constitution to silence by force and not by reason the complaints of criticism, just or unjust, of our citizens against the conduct of their agents.

In fact, on achieving office, he promptly pardoned all those who had been clapped into jail under the terms of the Sedition Act. This was praiseworthy, even though it must be admitted that these gentry were in fact scriveners of Jefferson's own party, men whom he had encouraged and subsidized to spread the very scurrilities for which they had been prosecuted. It is not generally known, however, that one Harry Crosswell was jailed in New York for a similar attack upon Jefferson himself, when *he* became President, without a single murmur from that staunch supporter

of the freedom of the press. Worse still, Croswell was not permitted by the Republican judges of the Court to put into evidence any testimony as to the *truth* of his alleged libel, though Alexander Hamilton labored mightily as his counsel—for the very principles that Jefferson had proclaimed on numberless occasions.

It is generally assumed that Andrew Jackson initiated the Spoils System, but an excellent case can be made out for Jefferson, who evolved the subtle doctrine that to the victor belongs at least *half* the spoils. Nevertheless you will find this virtuous disavowal quoted on many occasions:

The instances [of removals] will be few and governed by strict rule, and not party passion. The right of opinion shall suffer no invasion from me.

Practical politics, however, soon shifted his position, and evoked this later complaint:

Declarations by myself in favor of *political tolerance*, exhortations to *harmony* and affection in social intercourse, and to respect for the *equal rights* of the minority, have, on certain occasions, been quoted and misconstrued into assurances that the tenure of offices was to be undisturbed. But could candor apply such a construction? . . . If a due participation in office is a matter of right, how are vacancies to be obtained? Those by death are few; by resignation none. Can any other mode than that of

removal be proposed? This is a painful office; but it is made my duty, and I meet it as such.

Jefferson, the pacifist, the derider of war as a method of settling disputes, is a familiar figure. The tale of the *Chesapeake* and the *Leopard* has often been told. His parsimonious treatment of the navy is in every school-book. Big navies meant not only expense but encouragements to wars. The stock quotation to illustrate this Jefferson is the following:

I am . . . for such a naval force only as may protect our coasts and harbors from such depredations as we have experienced . . . nor for a navy, which, by its own expenses and the eternal wars in which it will implicate us, will grind us with public burthens, and sink us under them.

Yet the versatile gentleman might also be quoted by the proponents of preparedness and a big navy to this effect:

Insults must be resented, even if we had no feelings, yet to prevent their eternal repetition; or, in other words, our commerce on the ocean and in other countries, must be paid for by frequent wars.

But how prevent this?

By putting ourselves in a condition to punish them. Weakness provokes insult and injury, while a condition to punish, often prevents them. This reasoning leads to the necessity of some naval force; that being the only weapon by which we can reach an enemy. I think it to our interest to

punish the first insult; because an insult unpunished is the parent of many others.

When it came to the Constitution, Jefferson started out as the strictest of strict-constructionists. That is, while the Federalists held power. The National Bank Bill was unconstitutional, he contended, because nowhere in that august document was there any mention of the word *bank*.

To take a single step beyond the boundaries thus specially drawn around the powers of Congress, is to take possession of a boundless field of power, no longer susceptible of any definition.

Every bill introduced by the Hamilton forces—fisheries bill, bounties, protective tariff, credit stabilization—met the same cry; in fact, reported Fisher Ames tartly,

I know scarce a point which has not produced this cry, not excepting a *motion for adjournment*.

But when Jefferson and his cohorts took over the helm of government, his views on the constitutionality of measures broadened beyond all mere pettifogging limitations. The classic example is, of course, the purchase of the Louisiana Territory. Here the Constitution groaned and cracked in all its seams. A foreign nation, larger than the United States itself, was

being incorporated into the Union without so much as a by-your-leave from the separate States whose compact admittedly made no provision for such an aggrandizement of territory. Jefferson himself realized the utter illegality of his actions. In a private letter he admitted that

the executive, in seizing the fugitive occurrence which so much advances the good of their country, have done an act beyond the Constitution.

But, he added, with a fine disregard for former constitutional outcries on his part, the Legislature must cast

behind them metaphysical subtleties, and risking themselves like faithful servants, must ratify and pay for it.

In case, however, Congress might feel inclined to indulge in “metaphysical subtleties”, if it knew too much, he advised his whips in office that

the less that is said about any constitutional difficulty, the better; and that it will be desirable for Congress to do what is necessary, in silence.

Jefferson opposed a protective tariff in favor of American manufactures when it was advocated by Hamilton. Then, in his First Message to Congress, he listed manufactures, commerce, and navigation as three of the four pillars of prosperity, and suggested subtly

that a protective tariff "may sometimes be reasonably interposed". Prior to his accession to power, Jefferson advocated a strong and independent Judiciary. While approving the veto power granted to the Executive over acts of Congress, he added:

I should have liked it better had the Judiciary been associated for that purpose, or invested with a similar and separate power.

After coming into office, however, he attempted by impeachment to subordinate the Supreme Court to both the Executive and the Legislature, and quarreled fiercely with John Marshall's assertion of the right of constitutional veto. The Bank, which was decried as "an engine of corruption" when established by Hamilton, was continued without a qualm as soon as Jefferson gained control. The financial policies instituted by Hamilton were, according to Jefferson

adverse to liberty, and calculated to undermine and demolish the republic.

But they were followed with but little change during the Jefferson regime. And how did his followers feel, after being told for years that the Federalists were monarchs, aristocrats, monarchists, subservient to England, and despicable in every way, when they read Jeffer-

son's Inaugural Address, which soft-soaped these same miscreants? Their great Leader now unctuously proclaimed:

Every difference of opinion is not a difference of principle. We have called by different names brethren of the same principle. We are all republicans — we are all federalists.

III

Most famous of all Jefferson's utterances, perhaps, are those which praise rebellion and revolution *per se*, and advocate a large tolerance on the part of those in power against such rebels, if they should be unsuccessful in their efforts. He wrote:

If the happiness of the mass of the people can be secured at the expense of a little tempest now and then, or even of a little blood, it will be a precious purchase.

And again,

I hold it, that a little rebellion, now and then, is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical. . . . An observation of this truth should render honest republican governors so mild in their punishment of rebellions, as not to discourage them too much. It is a medicine necessary for the sound health of government.

These sentiments, coupled with his blessing upon the Mississippi territories — "if they see their interest in separation" — are large-

hearted indeed. But how do they jibe with his vindictive persecution of Aaron Burr for his alleged attempts along those very lines; how can they be brought into conformity with his desperate efforts to hang the aforesaid gentleman, even to the extent of interfering with the orderly processes of law? Certainly there is nothing of the benevolent revolutionist and believer in the Bill of Rights in the President who approved the contemptuous disregard of the sacred writ of habeas corpus at New Orleans and who tried to jam through Congress a suspension of that same writ in the placid, unmenaced East. Certainly it is difficult to recognize the upholder of a little rebellion now and then in the man who wrote the following answer to protests from the Courts and legislature of New Orleans anent the illegal arrest and deportation of Burr's followers under a military act of usurpation:

I do wish to see these people get what they deserved and under the maxim of the law itself, that *inter arma silent leges*, that in an encampment expect-

ing daily attack from a powerful enemy, self preservation is paramount to all law. I expected that instead of invoking the forms of the law to cover traitors, all good citizens would have concurred in securing them.

It must be obvious by now why Thomas Jefferson is so much quoted by present-day politicians with axes to grind. Who is there, possessing a thesis on any subject under the sun, who cannot find in the writings of the great philosopher-President just the happy phrase which clinches his point? What matters it that an opponent may dive into the same source and fount-of-all-wisdom and emerge triumphantly with another quotation, equally apt and diametrically opposite? The innocent, if slightly befuddled, reader swallows the whole and goes on his way rejoicing. Mount Sinai has thundered its verdict. Truth has lifted its veil. Thomas Jefferson has spoken.

The blunt explanation of the matter is simply this — Tom Jefferson was a pretty slick American politician himself.



HOW TO BEAT THE LANDLORD

BY HARRIET WEIR

RENT-BEATING has in recent years become one of this country's most widespread rackets. The existence of the racket can best be explained by the wholehearted contempt with which property-renters have come to regard property-owners—despite the fact that American landlords as a class are far from wealthy, their tenants consider them double-dyed representatives of predatory wealth. Most landlords are simply ordinary folk who have been brought up to believe in the old adage, "Keep a piece of land and in time it will keep you", and until a few years ago they had every reason to believe in the soundness of both their investments and their philosophy. Now, however, the landlord finds himself in a particularly unhappy spot.

Figures compiled by the Department of Commerce for a recent year show that, of the 84,719 renters who reported in sixteen scattered cities, 21,095 were in rent-arrears to the amount of \$2,415,933 for the one year. In Cleveland, the

largest city included, only 27,474—or 14 per cent of the total—reported, and 8,172 of them owed rent amounting to \$1,193,112. From such figures it is safe to estimate that landlords in these cities lost a total of \$15,000,000 for the year. Again, up to June, 1934, families on Relief in New Jersey had incurred a rent-debt of approximately \$9,000,000, and that December Jersey authorities estimated that the rent-debt was increasing by a million dollars a month. Yet rent-evaders are not only the poor. The Financial Survey of Urban Housing, issued by the Department of Commerce, reports many delinquents whose incomes ranged from \$3000 to \$7500 a year, and in most cases the rents amounted to less than 15 per cent of the income.

Rent-beating, then, is a flourishing racket. Its ramifications are endless. Let us look at the way it is usually worked.

The tenant moves into the landlord's house, paying the first month's rent in advance—if he is

on Relief he pays only half a month. He defaults on the second payment and, for the thirty days following, the landlord can do nothing but beg for his money. Only at the end of the month can he go to court for the rent, eviction order, or both — and the judgment will be awarded anywhere from a week to a month later. (If a month, another payment is due, but the judgment does not include this.) When the eviction notice is served the tenant is still allowed ten days to get out. An old hand at the game, our tenant stays where he is, and for his independence is permitted another three-day-notice. At the end of the three days, he still hangs on and the landlord goes after the sheriff. The sheriff is usually busy, and another week elapses. Then, arriving at last, the sheriff finds that a member of the family has suddenly become ill, in view of which calamity the eviction cannot be carried out. (The landlord can, of course, get a doctor to examine the stricken one, but that is an added expense.) This tragic-comic situation can go on indefinitely, with the landlord the most helpless person concerned. And the *least* he can lose is three-months' rent, legal fees, and costs.

During all these delays the landlord's expenses continue. If he has

kept on furnishing heat, electricity, and gas, he will have to pay these bills promptly; the utilities stand for no stalling. If he shuts the service off he may be arrested for withholding necessities in time of sickness, or he will have damage suits filed against him by the tenants and miscellaneous real or imaginary visitors to the building. If the lights are shut off, the occupants may burn candles, thus creating a fire hazard. Then the fire-warden and the insurance companies enter the picture. Finally, taxes must be paid promptly or the property will be sold for the taxes, plus penalty and interest.

The newest angle of the rent-evasion racket is the collusion between Relief offices and families on Relief. Say a Relief family is about to be evicted. The office gives the head of the family the money for the first half-month's rent, cautioning him at the same time not to tell the landlord that he is on Relief. Once in the new house the family holds out as long as it can, by the tactics outlined above. When, at long last, they are evicted, the Relief office shells out again and the whole business is repeated with another landlord as the goat. An example of the attitude of the Relief-conscious toward landlords is the fact that an

organization known as the Workers Alliance recently advised Relief recipients in New York City to deduct from their rent a planned 10 per cent cut in Relief allowance, and promised that if they were evicted the Alliance would move them back. Fortunately the Relief cut was restored before becoming effective.

On one occasion this writer accompanied a Relief worker on a visit to a family which had received its final notice to vacate. Light and heat had been shut off and the Relief office had provided the rent to be given to the next victim. Nevertheless the family was waiting to be moved forcibly, for the man of the house considered that in squeezing out as much free rent as possible he was doing a service for the Relief office!

The fine art of rent-evasion is not practiced only by those on Relief. Legal weaknesses of all sorts make it easy for the man with a job to mulct his landlord. In Ohio, for example, household furnishings cannot be attached unless the creditor can prove that the debtor intends to move them out of the county. Wages in that State can be garnisheed only to the extent of 25 per cent of each pay-check, and new attachments must be obtained each time until the amount of the

debt is made up. Employed single men or women find it hard to evade rent, for their checks can usually be garnisheed in full. Nevertheless they find ways. And a favorite trick of the single-unemployed is to get an employed person to share his rooms. The newcomer pays his rent in food, while the original rentor swears he is unable to pay rent because he has no job.

II

The rent-evasion racket has reached enormous proportions, as you see, and still nothing is done to stop it. True, landlords have been foolish not to follow the lead of hotels in obtaining the right to seize and hold the property of persons in arrears. But the situation in which property-owners find themselves is unprecedented in American history. Had they been able to foretell the future, they undoubtedly would have disposed of their property long ago and ceased being landlords.

What can be done about it now? A law making the avoidance of rent a felony should be the solution, but such a law is impossible. The laws passed today are those the majority favor, and for every property-owner there are at least ten property renters. And the Gov-

ernment, in addition to encouraging the racket through the Relief offices, has gone into competition with the private landlord—tearing down slums, building in their place modern apartments, and renting them at rates inconsistent with their cost. (These Government buildings, incidentally, are strictly for rent-payers, not for those on Relief.)

Practically the only solution for the landlord is for him to go out of business: sell his property for the

value of the land and throw the house in free. He takes a great loss, it is true, but he will anyway; and the longer he keeps the property, the greater the loss will be. Landlords have been treated shamefully, probably worse than any other class of business man. We have passed laws for the preservation and protection of birds, whales, trees, and practically everything else—but not for the man who has enough faith in his fellow men to become a landlord.



REMARKS ON FREDERICK THE GREAT— OR FDR?

BY THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY

The resistance opposed to him by the tribunals inflamed him to fury. He reviled his chancellor. He kicked the shins of his judges. He did not, it is true, intend to act unjustly. He firmly believed that he was doing right, and defending the cause of the poor against the wealthy. Yet this well-meant meddling probably did far more harm than all the explosions of his evil passions during the whole of his long reign. We could make shift to live under a debauchee or a tyrant; but to be ruled by a busy-body is more than human nature can bear.

KARL MARX, THE FALSE PROPHET

BY WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN

ALMOST sixty years have passed since Robert G. Ingersoll earned a place in the Inferno of America's small-town churchgoers by publishing a work entitled *Some Mistakes of Moses*. Other times, other idols. Today it is Karl Marx who has assumed the mantle of the infallible prophet. In one large country, the Soviet Union, it is as dangerous to express public doubt about the theory of surplus value, or any other Marxian dogma, as it would have been to deny the doctrine of transubstantiation in Spain under the Inquisition. I once visited a Soviet factory where the woman head of the factory committee pointed reverentially to a volume in the office and said: "When anything goes wrong, we open that book and find how to set it right." When I learned that the volume was Marx's *Capital*, I couldn't repress an irreverent thought that perhaps this was why so many things were visibly wrong in the factory.

Marx's reputation for infallibility, however, spreads far beyond

the confines of the Soviet Union. It is upheld by all communists, by a majority of socialists, and by various miscellaneous Left-Wingers. If Moses owed his similar reputation to tradition and historical inaccessibility, Marx is probably indebted for his to the formidably unreadable style of his *magnum opus*, cluttered up as it is with Hegelian metaphysics, wordy elaborations of the ideas of the classical economists, and long verbatim excerpts from dry-as-dust reports of factory inspectors. Indeed, one wonders how many of his devotees have really read him through from cover to cover; for even a cursory examination of his writings in the light of demonstrable historical facts will reveal dozens of mistakes, some of which are of such a fundamental character as completely to knock out the underpinning from the elaborate theoretical edifice which he endeavored to erect. Whether considered as a long-term or as a short-term prophet, Marx was as unreliable as the ordinary Wall Street tipster.

He consistently foresaw things which obstinately refused to happen and just as consistently missed some of the main trends of capitalist development.

As a result, his ghost, if it possessed the gift of sight, would be confronted with the unedifying spectacle of no revolution or the wrong kind of revolution in just those countries which, according to the Master's recipe, were to witness first the shaking off of chains by the working class. Side by side with this would be the equally disconcerting vision of the sole revolution which acknowledges Marx as a patron saint occurring in the one country which, by all Marx's formulas, was unripe for the transition to socialism. A chronicle of a single dozen of Marx's more conspicuous mistakes should discredit his credentials, not only as a prophet but even as a moderately successful guesser as to the nature of future political and economic trends.

I.

Curiously enough it was a professing communist in Krasnodar, a provincial town in southeastern Russia, who first, quite unconsciously, directed my attention to Marx's basic and major blunder. He was secretary of the local Com-

munist Party committee and I called on him during a trip through the Soviet provinces in 1924. The dingy, musty atmosphere of his office, with the floor strewn with cigarette butts and other litter and the table covered with disorderly masses of papers and half-filled glasses of tea, was familiar enough. But I was surprised by the sour look and glum silence which followed his reading of my Foreign Office good-character certificate to the effect that I was an American correspondent. At that time the local Comrades had not been so assiduously taught to see a spy, saboteur, and poisoner behind every bush; and an inquiring foreign visitor appealed to their sense of novelty and flattered their vanity.

But there was method behind the morose gloom of the Krasnodar local boss. I realized this when he broke his silence and burst out:

"Marx said that revolution must come first in the most highly developed capitalist countries. America is more advanced industrially than we are, but there is no American revolution. What's the matter with you Americans, anyway?"

This Comrade, I feel in retrospect, was a dangerous thinker and a likely subsequent candidate for

liquidation. For he had followed through to its logical implications one of Marx's main mistakes, although he characteristically threw the blame for the misfire of the revolution not on Marx's thinking, but on the Americans. This idea that socialism must come as the next higher stage of human development after capitalism has exhausted its possibilities of development, is the very cornerstone of Marx's dogmatic system. It is formulated in the following positive terms in one of the most vivid and vigorous passages in *Capital*:

While there is a progressive diminution in the number of capitalist magnates, there occurs a corresponding increase in the mass of poverty, oppression, enslavement, degeneration, and exploitation. But at the same time there is a steady intensification of the wrath of the working class — a class which grows ever more numerous, and is disciplined, unified, and organized by the very mechanism of the capitalist method of production. Capitalist monopoly becomes a fetter on the method of production which has flourished with it and under it. The centralization of the means of production and the socialization of labor reach a point where they prove incompatible with their capitalist husk. This bursts asunder. The knell of capitalist private property sounds. The expropriators are expropriated.

Surely no prophecy has been more signally confounded by the

subsequent course of events. Had Marx's analysis been accurate, the danger of revolution and the amount of human misery would have increased in precise proportion to the development of capitalism. The contrary has been the case. Two points of decisive evidence may be drawn from the experience of England, the country where Marx carried out most of his studies. Seventy years after Marx set down his dolorous prophecy, England is able to support its unemployed better than most of its employed workers fared during the years when *Capital* was being written. After the World War there was no case where military force had to be used to suppress internal disorder in England — a striking contrast to the unrest which prevailed after the Napoleonic Wars.

Of the three countries which, according to Marx, should have been first to burst their "capitalist husks" and emerge into the apocalyptic splendors of socialism, two — America and Britain — show little indication of setting up the co-operative commonwealth. The third highly-developed capitalist country, Germany, has indeed experienced a revolution, but hardly the kind which Marx foresaw as "inevitable".

2.

Closely allied with this cardinal blunder was Marx's equally-mistaken conviction that capitalism everywhere would survive long enough to perform all the functions which he allotted to it. So he wrote the following dictum in his *Critique of Political Economy*:

No form of society declines before it has developed all the forces of production in accordance with its own stage of development, and new and higher productive relations never take the place of the old before the material conditions for their existence have been developed within the shell of the old society itself.

Here again history has dealt unkindly by him. For the only large country where his ideas have won the status of a State religion is Russia, where capitalism was in its early adolescence at the time of the Bolshevik Revolution. Marx's idea was made to look even more ludicrous in China, where the shifting regions over which the Red flag has flown sporadically have been among the most primitive and backward in the country, pre-capitalist rather than capitalist in their economic set-up. It is too soon to be sure what will follow the current Spanish carnage: but here also there is no support or comfort for the idea that capitalism will give

way to socialism after it reaches its highest theoretical point of development. Experience has shown that, in precise contrast to Marx's teachings, capitalism is most easily overthrown not after it has struck deep roots, but while it is in an early stage of development. It has vastly more reason to fear violent demise in youth than in old age.

3.

Marx interpreted all human phenomena from the standpoint of what he called historical materialism. As he wrote:

The mode of production of material life determines the social, political, and intellectual process of life in general.

Now to interpret the rich and complex patterns of history in the light of this dogma is as futile as it would be to recognize only one scientific principle in an experiment which reveals the working of half a dozen. The Russians, who have swallowed Marxism hook, line, and sinker (and have had it jammed down their throats if they showed signs of gagging), have done an incredible job of *reductio ad absurdum* with this theory. I keenly remember the following extraordinary bit of musical higher criticism, delivered by the Marxian political wizard who was formerly

a feature of every Soviet concert:

Comrades, we shall hear to-night Glinka's *Ruslan and Ludmilla* overture and Mozart's *Jupiter* symphony. The cheerful tone of the overture is explained by the fact that Glinka lived in an age when Russia trade-capitalism was expanding and Russian textiles were penetrating the markets of the Near East. You will notice some wavering in the music of Mozart. This is because he was always wavering between the decaying aristocracy and the rising bourgeoisie of his time.

Marx's method of historical materialism fails to account for the obvious differences between peoples which are in the same stage of economic development. It leaves out of account such vital factors as race, religion, and nationality. It does not reckon with the immense importance of human personality. It is doubtful whether a single historical event could be correctly interpreted in terms of this theory.

4.

One of Marx's greatest mistakes was his belief that a dictatorship of the proletariat was both desirable and possible. Of all the ideas of minority rule that have been put forward since Plato's *Republic*, this conception of preferred rights for the class of manual wage-workers is surely one of the most patently unreasonable. The effort to put it

into practice in Soviet Russia has probably contributed as much as any single factor to the protracted agony of that country during the last two decades.

The packing of the universities with Red professors whose political coloration was their sole academic qualification and with students who were deliberately selected on a basis not of ability, but of class origin, the filling of offices on the same basis, led to a measure of incompetence in almost all branches of the State service which could not be duplicated anywhere in the world. Nowhere could one find so many "captains of industry" unable to distinguish between a turbine and a generator, so many managers of large farms who could not be trusted to know a silo from a haymow, so many engineers better versed in the laws of Marx than in those of chemistry and physics. And, as this incompetence led to shortage and suffering, and suffering led to discontent, a demand for scapegoats grew up; and the psychological background for the witchcraft sabotage trials was created. Inasmuch as these trials usually demanded as victims the relatively abler administrators and engineers, a vicious circle was created which is still far from being outlived.

Equally absurd with belief in the dictatorship of the proletariat as desirable was the belief that it could be maintained. The occupational list of the members of Stalin's new parliament is revealing in this connection. It shows a marked preponderance of highly-placed bureaucrats over proletarians. The right of the horny-handed sons of toil even to look decorative as members of legislative assemblies which always ratified laws unanimously, and of courts, the decisions of which were prescribed by the higher Communist Party officials, has been substantially curtailed. The trade-unions, stripped of what little power they originally possessed, have been transformed into pacemakers for speed-up methods. The "dictatorship of the proletariat" has ended, as anyone with moderate psychological insight could foresee, in a hardboiled dictatorship over the proletariat.

5.

Marx's labor theory of value is generally recognized as a mistake, and an unoriginal one at that. It was taken over from Ricardo and other classical economists who were seeking for a principle underlying the relative prices of different commodities in the market. They reached the conclusion that

labor supplied the supposed need of a common factor in production. This view became clearly untenable with the increased use of machinery, which created immense variations in the human labor required for various commodities.

6.

Marx completely misread the future of the farmer when he wrote:

Not until large-scale industry, based on machinery, comes does there arise a permanent foundation for capitalist agriculture. Then the enormous majority of the rural population is fully expropriated.

Now there is only one country where the enormous majority of the rural population has been fully expropriated, to an accompaniment of mass deportations, famine, and firing squads. That country is the Soviet Union. And the expropriation was the result not of any processes of capitalism, but of Stalin's Genghis Khan socialism. Elsewhere, small and medium farming holds its own, despite the prediction of *Capital*.

7.

As a seer of the destiny of his native Germany, Marx was a sad failure. In 1848 he committed himself to the hopeful forecast:

Germany is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution — and a German bourgeois revolution can be only the prelude to a proletarian revolution.

Germany had to wait seventy years for its “bourgeois revolution”, if one chooses to employ Marx’s terminology; and this, after another fourteen years, proved the prelude to the triumph not of Marx but of Adolf Hitler.

8.

Disappointed in 1848, Marx and his *fides Achates*, Engels, thought the joyful day of general smash-up had really arrived with the depression of 1857. Even the loss of part of the meager pay-check which he drew as correspondent of Horace Greeley’s New York *Tribune* could not dim Marx’s joy in the belief that revolution was just around the corner. He wrote to Engels:

Although I am in serious financial difficulties myself, I have not felt so happy since 1849 as I do in the face of this eruption.

After all, there would be a kick in a root-and-branch social revolution and, if it failed to come off, there was always the surplus value which Engels extracted from the proletariat in his business transactions to fall back on. Engels, hot as Marx in the chase after the revolutionary mirage, replied:

I feel just as you do. In 1848 we thought our time was coming and in a certain sense it did; but this time it is . . . and everything is at stake.

The rest of the world, however, failed to realize that “everything was at stake” and the ‘Fifties passed into the ‘Sixties without bringing any realization of the gospel according to Marx.

9.

But Marx’s urge to see revolution on the near horizon would not down. Baffled in 1848 and again in 1857, he delivered himself of the following apocalyptic pronouncement in 1867:

The American Civil War has sounded the tocsin for the European working class. In England the revolutionary process is plain to all who have eyes to see. When it reaches a certain intensity it will necessarily react upon the Continent.

Like many of Marx’s ventures into the prophetic field, this forecast was about as wrong as it could be. No amount of historical research could establish a plausible connection between an American conflict that paved the way for two generations of intensive national enrichment along capitalist lines and the revolutionary strivings of the European working class. As for a “revolutionary process” in England exciting responsive movements on the Continent,

Great Britain has remained imper-
turbably indifferent to the post-
war Continental communist and
fascist overturns.

10.

In the *Neue Rheinische Revue*
in 1850, Marx and Engels painted
this gaudy and completely-inaccu-
rate picture of the results of the
discovery of gold in California:

Thanks to the gold of California and
to the tireless energy of the Yankees,
both coasts of the Pacific will soon be
as thickly populated, as highly indus-
trialized, and as open for trade as the
coast from Boston to New Orleans is
now. The Pacific Ocean will then
play the role the Atlantic Ocean is
playing now . . . and the Atlantic
Ocean will sink to the level of a great
lake, such as the Mediterranean is to-
day. The one chance which the civ-
ilized countries of Europe have to
avoid falling into the same industrial,
commercial, and political dependence
as Italy, Spain, and Portugal lies in a
social revolution while there is still
time.

No wonder Marx's sympathetic
biographer, Franz Mehring, finds
it necessary to resort to occasional
apologies for his hero's flights of
fancy, of which the following is
characteristic:

In their youth Marx and Engels, the
latter even more so than the former,
saw the coming things much nearer
than they were in reality, and often
they hoped to pick the ripe fruit
where the first blossoming had
scarcely begun.

11.

In *Capital*, Marx thunders
against piecework methods of pay-
ment. This form of payment he
describes as very disadvantageous
to the workers, leading to physical
exhaustion as a result of excessive
efforts to raise the level of wages,
and to increased competition
among the workers, breaking
down their solidarity. Marx saw
in piece-wages part of the original
sin of private capitalism, and as-
sumed that it would be abolished
under socialism. He would doubt-
less be surprised if he could appear
in a Soviet factory today and find,
along with a crude lithograph de-
picting his own features, wall
placards demanding more inten-
sive application of piecework and
denouncing any opponents of this
system as Trotskyist spies and
saboteurs, agents of the *Gestapo*
and the Japanese secret service,
and probably murderers and train-
wreckers in the bargain.

12.

Marx also regarded the wage sys-
tem as a product of capitalist in-
iquity. A considerable part of the
first volume of *Capital* is devoted
to efforts to prove that exploita-
tion can be eliminated only by
abolishing the sale of labor power,

i.e., by doing away with the wage system. Here, as in other cases, history has played a joke on Marx. Twenty years after the revolution which was made in his name, the Soviet Union gives not the slightest sign of scrapping the wage system, which is, indeed, becoming markedly and increasingly differential.

II

Behind all these mistaken assumptions lies a greater and more fundamental error. This is Marx's failure to realize that unrestricted power is far more oppressive, far more conducive to exploitation, than private ownership of wealth. In other words, an Absolutist State, monopolizing both political and economic power, not only can be, but, *must be* a more ruthless exploiter than the private employer in a democratic country.

The latter, assuming that he is obsessed with a desire to short-change his employees, faces a host of curbs and checks. His workers may organize a union and strike. They may leave him individually for a more appreciative boss. And the working of a competitive system generally carries its own penalty for unfair labor policies. But what curb or check can there be on the Soviet local satrap who has re-

ceived orders from Stalin to starve the peasants into submission or to liquidate a few saboteurs or to throw a few thousand kulaks out of their homes? Obviously, in the light of recent Soviet history, none whatever. Nor is this state of affairs appreciably changed by the recent *opera bouffe* "democratic" election, in which the rule — one candidate, one constituency — was rigidly adhered to. More than one of these carefully handpicked candidates mysteriously disappeared, with the aid of the secret police, before the votes were counted.

A full record of the mistakes of Marx would fill a much longer article, even a book. From this incomplete list, however, it is evident that many cardinal articles of the Marxian faith are nothing but pretentious humbug and that its author, far from being an infallible prophet, cannot be considered even a tolerably shrewd observer in his chosen fields of political and economic speculation. Not the least cause of Russia's tragedy during the last two decades has been the effort, foredoomed to failure in advance, to stretch the peoples of the Soviet Union on the Procrustean bed of Marxism, to make the mistaken ideas of Marx come true no matter what the cost in human suffering.

THE RED GERANIUM

A Story

BY HOBART LEWIS

WE LIVED in only one room. It wasn't a large room, but it was large enough. The table was by the window, and over there was the bureau. Facing the door was the bed. There were a couple of chairs. For an hour or two in the morning there was sunlight and the room looked ashamed in the brightness. After the sun had got around the block it was better, and in the night-time it was perfectly all right. It was a good room for the night. With lamp-light it became alive and warm. Then there was the bed. It was a large bed and it was made for the night. When you looked at it in the daytime it looked wrong. If it had vanished in the daytime it would have been better, but it didn't vanish and we used it a good deal in the daytime. We would lie on it and read. We would read the papers lying on it. There was never anything wrong with the bed on Sunday mornings. It looked in place. It was only the

week-day mornings. You will think I am making a great to-do about that bed, but in one room a thing like that is important.

You will understand what I mean when I tell you that I was always secretly ashamed of that room in the daytime until Linda brought home the geranium. It was a red one, and she put it on the table by the window. After that the room was all right. When the sunlight came in, the flower caught the sunlight and held it. All day the sunlight seemed to be in the room, and you didn't look at the room any more. Only at the flower. Then the flower died. We watered it, but it died. Things do that. Nice things especially. They die very easy. But it didn't matter. The flower pot was there in the saucer, and the geranium stem was in it. There were a few leaves. The leaves didn't die right away, just the flower. But if you had once seen the flower in the room, for you it was still there.

We didn't buy another. It wasn't the money. We had the money for a geranium then, but for a long time we didn't need it. After a while, after a long while, we had forgotten how the room looked with the flower in it, but by that time we had no money, and there were other matters to think about.

These things come singly. They stay a while. They make an impression. They seem big and important, and then they go. You forget them. I had forgotten the geranium. I only mention it now to show you how it was in our room at that time.

I was employed then. I worked in the mornings at the tannery. I enjoyed it. I was sorry when the noon whistle would blow and there would be nothing more to do. We only worked mornings at that tannery. I always carried a lunch in hopes we would work on, but this only happened once or twice. Still it was nice to carry a lunch pail to work. There was always the chance that you would work through until supper time. At noon-time I would buy a paper and while I was eating my lunch I would read the want ads. If there was anything promising I would follow it up. Usually there was nothing promising, and usually the things that had been

promising were not so at all.

In those days Linda worked too. There was a laundry nearby, and in the afternoons she would work feeding sheets into the mangle. Then she would return and get our supper on the stove in the room that was down the hall from our room. Several families had the use of that stove, and in this way we all saved money. We could have saved more. We could have bought our supplies in common with the others and eaten with them all together. We didn't do it at that time. I thought perhaps we were selfish, but Linda said we had our own life to lead. The way we did it was to eat at the table by the window in our room. I was glad to eat alone with Linda, and when we had the red geranium the table looked very fine, and Linda looked very fine sitting across from me and next to the flower. We were happy in those days, and if you think we were selfish and unthoughtful you must consider whether it is possible to be happy and unselfish.

There were two mattresses on the large bed. Both of them were thin and old and the two were supposed to make up for what they lacked singly. Of course this miracle did not occur, and I often said to Linda that two mattresses

were harder than one. Nevertheless it was a good bed, and we had pleasure in it. I am not talking against it. I mention it only to show that when Linda brought Rosa Demuth home with her the two mattresses became important.

After that we kept one of the mattresses under the bed in the daytime and at night I would pull it out and sleep on it on the floor beside the bed. Linda said that the bed was no worse for having only one mattress. I don't know because I never slept in the bed until after Rosa Demuth died, and then we put the two mattresses together and it was as before, except that it never seemed right to be happy in that bed.

Rosa Demuth was sick, and when she could no longer do the work at the laundry they let her go. You can't blame them. They paid for work and she couldn't work. Rosa didn't blame the laundry. She had no people, and the fellow who had got her this way had gone off. She didn't know where he was. Lots of them do that. They get a girl sick and with child, and then they go off. You can blame them. They are not like the laundry. You can blame them, you can curse them, and that is all you can do about it.

Rosa didn't curse. Mostly she kept silent. Maybe she had got through with the cursing, but I don't think so. She wasn't the kind to curse. The girls who can curse don't get themselves where Rosa was. Or if they do, they know what to do about it. They are the wise ones. Rosa wasn't wise. She was only sick and unhappy. She was a thin little girl, and she lay in our bed and was lost in it. Even with the way she was, she was thin. You could hardly tell it, and she was into the seventh month. At the laundry they hadn't known. Not the bosses. The girls knew it, but the bosses let her go because she was sick all the time. She got tired so easy. What tired her the most was that she would feel like fainting and it tired her to fight against it. If she fainted they would take her to the nurse and find out and fire her. She didn't want to faint and be fired. She wanted money. So she fought against it and it tired her. She'd feel herself going limp and to prevent it she'd throw down her head to get the blood into it. That way she scorched things in the mangle, or it would get jammed. These things take time, and time, to a laundry, when they are paying twenty cents an hour, is money. You can

see how it would mount up. Naturally they had to let her go. Linda and the girls helped out and covered it up some, but when it got so obvious, when she had to fight that way against the fainting, when it happened three and four times in an afternoon, there was nothing else to do. I suppose they were sorry. Naturally they were sorry, but what else was there to do? People don't want scorched sheets coming back in the wash—you know that yourself. Of course if the people had known how it happened they wouldn't have minded. But people don't know those things.

II

After Rosa Demuth came to live with us in our room it wasn't very different. She was a little girl and quiet, and she stayed in the bed all the time. She never complained. She was sick and she suffered, but she didn't make you aware of it. When she was happy it never occurred to you to think how fine she was to be happy and sick and alone at the same time. She was just that way. When you spoke to her and paid attention to her she smiled. When you weren't paying attention to her she wasn't there. She wasn't in the way. I slept on

the mattress beside the bed and I liked it. Linda slept in the bed with Rosa until Rosa got so very sick. Then Linda slept on the mattress with me. But we were chaste all that time. We didn't touch each other. It didn't seem right. It would have been like showing Rosa what she didn't have. Or what she had had too much of. Anyhow it wouldn't have been right.

I was employed then. We had a little money and we got a doctor in. He came with his bag and he felt Rosa's pulse, and he listened to her heart, and he listened to her breathing. He took Rosa's blood-pressure, and then he patted Rosa on the cheek and told her she was a fine girl and not to worry. After that he went away. He was a fine man. He knew there wasn't anything you could do, but he came every week. He knew Rosa had tuberculosis, and he came every week and went through the motions, and we felt better and he never sent us a bill. He knew how it was.

The night when Rosa got so very bad, I went and got the doctor, and he came and gave Rosa some dope right away and put her to sleep. Then he put Linda and me out of the room. We waited in the hall. The doctor

had a nurse with him, and a little while after we heard the baby cry, the nurse brought him out and showed him to us. The nurse said that Rosa was asleep, and that she had slept through it all. Naturally, Rosa never woke up. She died. There wasn't anything else for her to do. We kept the baby. We didn't want the baby. We had done what we could do not to have one, and we had been successful, and now we had one.

There was nothing to do but put the other mattress back on the bed and pull out one of the bureau drawers for Rosa's baby to sleep in. Pretty soon he was our baby. There wasn't any Rosa. It was like she never had lived at all. That fellow Rosa slept with didn't exist. He was just a fellow. He had got Rosa with child and had gone off. Now it was our child.

Because I worked only mornings I could look after the baby in the afternoons when Linda was at the laundry. Everything was the same. Only we didn't spend any money on geraniums. Then the tannery shut down, and we didn't spend any money at all. We paid for the room, and we bought food, but we didn't spend anything. Not more than what it takes just to live. Now it is the same. The baby is three years old, and it is our baby.

We eat with the other families in the room down the hall. We save money that way. We have a different room now. A smaller one. There isn't any window in it but it seems bright, sometimes. We are not ashamed of our room. We sleep in the big bed at night, and in the daytime we lie on it and read the papers. We are happy enough. The room is like the time when we had the red geranium on the table. But maybe you don't understand.

We thought we were happy when we ate in our room by ourselves, away from the others. We thought our geranium was something special. Now we have the kid. It would sound funny to say that the kid is like a geranium, but after you think about it enough, it is easy to see that there isn't any difference. A kid and a geranium, they are the same thing after all. It is only a question of how long you have to look at it before you see it. When you see it, you feel good inside. There are some people who never do see it, and they are the lonely ones. The fellow that slept with Rosa and got her with child, that's the kind he was. He doesn't care that Linda and I have his kid, that even without windows our room is bright. He doesn't understand. There are lots of people like that.

EDITORIAL

Why Hold an Election in 1940?

THE November elections came and went on the customary schedule. They were introduced by the customary amount and kind of campaign-talk. They kept reporters, broadcasters, and editors busy for the customary length of time, and were run off about as quietly as usual, on the whole. They were also quite as barren of results as might be expected, proving nothing in particular; nor so far as we can see, have they made any significant change in the country's outlook for the future. Even from a partisan point of view they were indeterminate. The party in power can put up a pretty good case for calling them a victory, and so can the Republicans. So politically, it would seem that the country is not much forrader than it was before they were held, and as for all the good they did to the country's general condition, they might as well not have been held at all.

Such, at least, is our view. We are far from saying that "we planned it that way", and for the country's sake and our own we are sorry

enough that they went as they did. But as a matter of fact, the elections turned out in every essential respect just as we thought they would, and as three months ago we said they would. They left Roosevelt still the unfettered boss of these United States, which is the main thing, with every prospect of being able to keep the job as long as he wants to hold it. They left his bureaucracy as numerous and powerful as ever. They left his policies supreme. They left safe and sound his great new political technique of bribing the unemployed and intimidating the employed. They put up no substantial interference with his wholesale confiscations of the individual's rights and liberties. On the contrary, for pretty nearly the *n*th time it was demonstrated that the new political technique has maneuvered the electorate into the iron grip of Roosevelt's own personal Tammany; and surely an election which demonstrated nothing more than that was not worth holding.

Another election is coming on in 1940; its possibilities are already being discussed. We have a suggestion to make about it which may strike our readers as rather startling, but we make it in all good faith, and—if our readers will bear with us long enough to hear us through—we think we can put up a fair case for it. Our suggestion can probably be best introduced by the query: Why hold an election at all in 1940?

Consider the question first from the standpoint of economy. The country is very hard up, and holding an election, especially a Presidential election, is a frightfully expensive business. Electing Mr. Hoover is said to have cost \$2,000,000, which was thought to be quite a bit of money, but at that time we hadn't seen nothing yet in the way of campaign-expenses. No one had hit on the bright idea of touching the United States Treasury for a slush-fund; the \$2,000,000 was private money. Now, however, the cost of electing a President has run up from millions to billions; the last touch was for something around \$4,000,000,000, and no one can guess what the next will be. It is too much. The richest nation in the world can't begin to stand such a drain indefinitely; and yet if Pres-

idential elections are to go on at four-year intervals as heretofore, there is no other prospect in sight.

Then consider the matter from the standpoint of practical utility. In the first place, as everyone knows, under our vaunted republican system there is no beating a party in power which has an unlimited war-chest. The last Presidential election proved that. It is a sorry truth, and we are as bitterly ashamed of it as anybody can be, but it is mere idleness to break one's head against a fact. So long as the present Administration wishes to stay in power, and so long as the Treasury is able to provide the funds, just so long the present Administration is unbeatable. The same would be true of any other party in power employing the same technique. We repeat, everyone knows this most discreditable fact to be a fact, and anyone who had the sense he was born with would accept it as such, distasteful though it be. Why, then, should the country have its nose rubbed in the mess of another election merely to demonstrate something which everybody already knows is so?

Then again, consider the matter from the standpoint of any available alternative. Suppose the impossible should happen, and

the present Administration were turned out, just what could be got in its place that would be any better? Remember, the preponderant mass of proletarian voting-power, self-conscious and loosely-but-sufficiently organized, would still be where it now is; the Treasury would be where it is, and the new political technique of keeping the one in hand by means of the other would still be workable. Well, then, obviously, if you put in the present crop of Republicans, you would simply be getting the New Deal all over again, perhaps with added features which might be even worse. If you put in the fascists or communists, the result would be the same, plus a lot of beastly rows kicked up by the unreconciled "counter-revolutionaries", and animated by machine-gunning, purges, herdings into concentration-camps, and similar doings in a prolonged proletarian Walpurgis-night. Put in the Townsendites, thirty-a-weekers, Epics, and such-like, and you know for sure that they would run the country into chaos even faster than the present Administration is doing. So the choice on the whole seems a poor one — why go to the trouble and enormous expense of making any choice?

Our idea would be for Roosevelt

to let business limp along on three legs and gradually slow down "recovery" until the Spring of 1940; and then, when people were really discouraged, noisy, and desperate, for him to proclaim an "emergency" and simply take over. He would abolish the Constitution, dissolve Congress, re-organize the Federal courts, and thenceforth run the country openly and above-board as a one-man show.

All things considered, we think that this would be the best thing Roosevelt could do. It would certainly give the country a few years of blessed relief from political squabbles and skulduggery, and if the man chose to behave himself with a proper sense of his opportunities, it might be the cheapest and easiest way of getting the nation on its feet once more. His personal popularity is so great that we are pretty sure that, after another two years of depression, anxiety, and discouragement (and Mr. Varney showed in the November issue of *THE MERCURY* how easily this can be managed), the people would stand for it. We confess that we ourselves don't like the idea — it isn't our style — and if such a thing came to pass we would take a regretful leave of our readers and "go back where we came from", as good hundred-per-centers are al-

ways advising malcontents to do. But we are now talking about what seems best for the country, not about what suits us best; and since the choice of alternatives is so absurdly unpromising, any way you look at it, we think this idea of ours is about the best chance that the poor old country has.

II

This no-election idea was suggested to us by a very interesting historical parallel which Roosevelt might like to consider, if he has not done so already. It was pulled off in France nearly a century ago, and so successfully that the French got eighteen years of roaring prosperity out of it, which was not so bad. One can easily see now how it might have been managed even better, and consequently how it could be managed much better here; but even so, if it worked only as well here as it did there, it might be worth a try.

In 1848 the French fired out a perfectly good king for no compelling reason that anybody could discover, and set up for the fourth time a sort of jack-leg republic.¹

¹ It is known as the Second Republic, but between 1793 and 1799 there were three nominally republican governments. From 1789 to the present time, France has lived through three monarchies, two empires (three, if you count the Hundred Days), three republics

Presidential timber was as scarce as it is in America today, and the choice fell on a dark-horse candidate, Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte. His main assets were that he was his uncle's nephew and that otherwise nobody knew much about him. The two opposing candidates were impossible, so he won in a landslide, by more than twice as many votes as the other two put together. He was elected for four years, like our Presidents, but unlike them he could not succeed himself; he would be out in 1852.

Louis was a strange character — reticent, silent, regarded as a harmless visionary, but with a considerable gift for friendship. Besides being a very able man, he had interesting personal qualities. He never forgot a favor, never lost the chance to do somebody a good turn, never was disloyal to a friend, never was mean or small-minded, and never but twice in his whole career did he show himself vindictive or ungenerous on personal grounds — he exiled the sculptor David d'Angers, and would not invite Lady Jersey to the Tuileries because she had snubbed him in his

(five, if you count the Directory and the Consulate), and two Communes. Why should Americans fuss about fascism, communism, or a few constitutional changes now and then? If France could stand all that and still survive, probably America could worry through a political shift or two.

days of poverty and banishment in London. The most unfriendly critics of his regime concede that his devotion to the cause of the common people was sincere, and that he had a noble ambition to lighten the weight of their wretchedness.

He did not like the prospect of losing his job in 1852 — naturally, no job-holder ever does — and there was no doubt about his having had a “mandate” from the people in 1848, as impressive as Roosevelt’s in 1932. He knew if he did go out he would leave the country butchered to make a hoodlum-holiday in a free-for-all among contending parties of royalists, republicans, and socialists. He may have thought — he said he did, and may actually have done so — that he was the one man to stand between France and chaos; that if he could keep his job with enough power to carry out his intentions, he would give the country a much longer season of tranquillity and prosperity than it could otherwise have; which in fact he did.

The Constitution and the General Assembly, however, stood in his way; exactly, for example, as our Constitution and Congress has stood in the way of some of Roosevelt’s designs. So Louis-Napoléon and his inner circle did in 1851

what we are suggesting Roosevelt might do in 1940. They organized a *coup d’état*, dissolved the General Assembly, putting most of them in jail, exiled or jailed all political opposition, superseded the Constitution, and continued Louis-Napoléon’s Presidency for a term of ten years. They submitted the matter to a *pro forma* election, and got it ratified by about 7,500,000 votes against 650,000. A year later, in 1852, they converted France into an empire, with Louis-Napoléon as Emperor, and took another plebiscite which ratified their action by an even larger score, 7,824,000 to 253,000. No doubt these elections had a Hitlerian and Rooseveltian tinge to them, but like our elections, they faithfully went through the motions of conforming to the republican principle, and there the figures are. Louis-Napoléon always declared himself a good republican, even as an emperor; nowadays he would have styled himself a democrat, as Roosevelt does — the terms are interchangeable in common use, apparently.

We are not suggesting that either in 1940 or ever Roosevelt should declare this country an empire, with himself as emperor. In the first place, it would be unnecessary because, as we have often pointed

out, America's actual political structure is already built on an imperial model. Moreover, changing the American system's name would be bad judgment because Americans, like children everywhere, are always more concerned with packaging than they are with a product; they will take any swindling nostrum in the political line if it is labeled to suit them, preferably if labeled "democratic". There is no use in going against this infantile peculiarity, especially when nothing substantial is to be gained by doing so.

But short of this, we are all for Louis-Napoléon's program, even though we don't like it. We see it as a sort of Hobson's choice, and we hope we shall always be patriotic enough to sink our personal preferences for the country's good. One or two features of the program, indeed, strike us favorably. Jailing Congressmen, for example; we are strong for that, and also for the silencing and dispersion of those elements in our society which have come to be a common nuisance, such as uplifters, do-gooders, quasi-patriotic associations, economic planners, and such-like. Louis-Napoléon made short work of clamorous nonentities of this kind, thereby earning our profound regard.

One other feature of his regime seems to us altogether admirable: we refer to the press-laws. There was no formal censorship, but the press-laws were so framed that any mention of public affairs, foreign or domestic, was distinctly dangerous. You were every bit as likely to get into trouble if you praised the regime as if you dispraised it. Hence editors took no chances; they cut out all politics and public affairs, lock, stock, and barrel, and then had to look around for other interesting matter to fill their space; and the consequence was that France has never had such good newspapers, either before that period or since. In brief, the press-laws were the most civilizing measure promulgated by the Second Empire. If Roosevelt copies them and enforces them strictly throughout his ten-year term, we believe the United States will see the faint dawn of its first chance of ever becoming a civilized country. We earnestly recommend the matter to the President's attention.

No election in 1940; no more political diatribes in the *New Masses*, the *Nation*, and *THE MERCURY*; plenty of wide, spacious boulevards in New York City; and Empress Eugenie (Eleanor) hats for women. What could be sweeter?

THE OTHER SIDE

This department presents the views of some of those who most sharply disagree with THE MERCURY's editorial policy.

EPISTLE TO THE RIGHT

BY MAX LERNER

I ASSUME that there is still time in America to make a plea, even to the embittered Right, for ordinary social decency in the years that lie ahead of us. The fact that THE AMERICAN MERCURY has through this Department opened by ever-so-slender a crack the door leading out of the dark chamber of its thought may be an item of evidence that Americans far to the right of center still harbor a faint glimmer of light.

If so it would be a solitary glimmer in a world that seems intent on a return to the cave. The Nazi triumphs in Europe have sent that continent hurtling back to a medieval social system and a paleolithic code of honor in the midst of a Twentieth Century technology. The result in America has been to leave those on the Right in an uncomfortable position. Except for a few extremists, they can-

not help recoiling at the spectacle of terror and death and oppression worse than death — of a movement that has come into power on the wave of nationalist and racist hysteria, that makes a cynical cult of lies and brutality, that cracks the whip of terror over a majority of even the capitalists themselves, that equips itself with the total State force and proceeds to evoke from men their worst sadisms and stamp out everything they have in their more lucid moments held dear. And yet, for all this recoil, the spectacle retains its fascination for those on the Right. The whole logic of their position is an equivocal one. They have not decided yet what weapons they are willing to use or how far they are willing to go with them.

Some have, of course, decided. There are undoubtedly a number of capitalists and a group of mid-

dle-class adventurers and intellectuals who will go the whole hog if the chance offers. These include the open fascists in America, the professional *Bundists* and their allies, the embittered labor-hating industrialists and Jew-hating fanatics whose passion has brought them to the verge of social madness. These men are not moved mainly by economic self-interest. Their propulsions have not even that degree of rationality. To most of them, whatever their wealth or lack of it, life has yielded but meager satisfaction: and they wreak their frustration upon whatever symbols the age offers. These men—the Kuhns, Girdlers, Varneys, Pelleys, Hagues, Winrods—are not of any social importance. They become important only if they become the spearpoint of a broader and more massive movement of conservatives toward the extreme Right. What happens in the end to the handful of adventurers and fanatics is on their own heads. No one will mourn them when they are destroyed by the brutal energies they have aroused, any more than their kind were mourned in Germany when they were purged by the people they had brought to power.

But the great number of those on the Right in America are of a

different stamp. They are not yet committed irrevocably to the violence that men like them are practicing in Europe. In their class-fears and personal insecurity they have turned to obsessive hatred of President Roosevelt as a symbol of a militant democracy or John L. Lewis as a symbol of awakened labor. But there are still limits that bound their action and keep the world they bestride from bursting into the nightmare excesses of Europe.

It is to these men and women that I write. They will not be persuaded by what I say, for in the end it is only the cruel logic of events that carries persuasion; but words can give a framework of meaning to events when they come. These people fall into two groups. I want to talk first of the capitalists themselves.

By the capitalists I mean the active industrialists, big or small, who run or control the productive plant of the nation, the financiers, who push about the chess-board figures of investment and speculation that mean power in our world, the advertising executives and corporation lawyers and high technical and management employees who form the camp-followers of the capitalist army and feel they are linked with its fortunes of war.

Their actual behavior toward employees, strikers, competitors, and consumers, in the economic realm where behavior counts and not words, has on the whole been hard, ruthless, oppressive. In the political realm, however, they have spoken the language of democracy. When they have governed, they have governed by deputy. Their candidates for office have been their political front, while the puppet-strings of economic power have been kept artfully concealed. It has been the function of these frontmen to keep democracy tame and make it safe for capitalism. Even today, when the old reactionary politicians have been wholly discredited, the capitalists have not given up the pseudo-democratic game. The "new faces" movement among the Republicans, led by Dewey, Barton, Lodge, Stassen, and Reed, is brilliantly rebuilding what the ineptitude of the older men had broken down. What remains is to see whether the capitalists will be content to carry on within the rules of the democratic game when the "new faces" have proved incapable of concealing the old body of an unplanned and inefficient capitalism.

I hope the capitalists will be governed by their sense of economic interest. If they are, then

when the time comes for them to choose between embracing fascism and trying to make a planned capitalism work within a democratic framework, they will choose the latter.

I say "if" they are governed by their economic interest. The facts do not wholly bear out such an assumption. There are a group of capitalists, let us call them "New Deal fellow-travellers" if you will, who have made at least a tentative choice in the direction of their economic interests. They are not moved by benevolence or proletarian sympathy. We may say categorically that they would not love the New Deal so much, loved they not profits more. They recognize the necessity of a regulated or even a planned economy, if their whole fabric is not to collapse. They prefer the planning to be done by men like themselves rather than by fascist adventurers. And they are willing to have their profits limited and their activities regulated through democratic means, rather than suffer the wiping out of all political and religious liberties. They have learned from the fate of their fellows in Germany and Italy that when these liberties are destroyed, it is not long before the economic liberties of all save a few big capitalists follow.

II

I can see this as a tenable position for American capitalist conservatives to take, whether they are Republicans or Democrats. Whether they will do so is quite another matter. Thus far they have shown a blindness and hatred which makes one doubt very strongly their capacity to take the long view. In their various obsessive *anti* positions—whether they are hating Roosevelt or the New Deal or the liberals or “communists” or intellectuals or democracy itself—they are playing with fascist fire. It will not do for them to shrug their shoulders and say that they have nothing to do with fascism. We all know the fascist conflagration spots in America. Our patterns of local and regional bossism have been turning fascist, as New Orleans, Boston, Kansas City, and Chicago testify. Our patterns of corporate power have been turning fascist, as Jersey City, Dearborn, and San Francisco testify. Why pretend to know nothing of the fire when the underbrush is burning in a score of places and you can smell the smoke from coast to coast?

What is true of the capitalists is true to an even greater degree of the second group on the Right—

the lower middle class. If the capitalists are blind, their blindness is self imposed. But the middle-class folk are being made the dupes in a ghastly game of blind-man's buff from which they can never emerge the winners. If they are on the Right it is because they have been such easy material for the propaganda of the fascists and the fascist-minded capitalists. It is on their mind that the press, the radio, the movies, the journals and the churches most easily imprint the stereotypes of reaction. It is they who are insecure, bewildered, emotionally-starved, eager for some release from the passive amusements and the tinsel banalities of their lives. The slogans on the Right seem to offer a prospect of release—the chance to channel their hatreds against “Jews” and “Reds” and “New Dealers”, the longed for scapegoat-symbols for their own sense of failure in an unplanned economy that victimizes all groups.

Is it too late to tell them that they can't win, no matter who emerges victor from a breakdown of the social fabric? If they continue their attacks on democratic procedures, their sabotage of the liberal crisis governments, their ridicule of reason and planning in human affairs, their hostility to

trade-union organization, their shattering of the unity of resistance to fascism, the only result can be economic and political collapse. And from such collapse only an extremist fascism can profit. There will be long years of civil war or worse. It will take a desperately long time to rebuild the economic machine. And while the machine is in process of being built up again, even to its present meager standard of the national income, it will be the middle class and the workers who will suffer most — in terms of sheer privation, in terms of the ordinary civil liberties and human decencies.

I do not think it is too late to say this to the middle class. To be sure, as I have watched the response of many of them to the drummed-up, hysterical catchwords of the various "leagues" to "uphold" the Constitution, or to the anti-union propaganda of the National Association of Manufacturers, or to the fantastic attempts of the Dies Committee to smear the New Deal by tying it up with "Red" activities, I have grown discouraged about the American future. In fact, as I have read the articles in the successive numbers of *THE AMERICAN MERCURY* addressed primarily

to the middle class, and in their consequences re-enforcing the reactionary tendencies in American life, I have felt melancholy about the future of American journalism. And yet, considering the extent to which almost the entire daily and periodical press and the radio and the movies use the stereotypes of an unplanned capitalism and play thereby into the hands of reaction, the amazing thing is not that so many of the middle-class have been duped and doped by the stuff that is fed them. What is amazing is that so many still remain who recognize that their true interests do not lie with the Right, both in terms of standards of living and even more in terms of standards of life.

We face a choice of a return to the cave, or an affirmative effort on the part of all groups to increase the national income, subject the economic system to rational and planned community controls, and do it all under democratic procedures. Even conservatives can join in this effort, if they genuinely care about conserving human values. The caskets that hold our national destiny have not yet been locked and sealed. The choice is still ours to make.

THE STATE OF THE UNION

BY ALBERT JAY NOCK

What Is Democracy?

I WONDER if my readers are as completely fed up with the word "democracy" as I am. A century ago, when "liberty, equality, fraternity" were the big words in France, Prince de Metternich said he got so sick of hearing about "fraternity" while he was in Paris that if he had a brother he would call him cousin. I believe if I had a "democrat" in my family today, I would call him things far worse—things which can't be printed, so disgusted I am with the term.

For the first time in three weeks I picked up a New York newspaper yesterday and there I read that, in a speech the day before, Hitler called himself "the arch-democrat". An editorial on the Monroe Doctrine, in the same paper, spoke about "our interest in joining with the other democracies to preserve the Western hemisphere from any threat of attack". These are mere casual samples of the wretched literary sculch which confronts one at every tack and turn. There must be as many different kinds of democracy in this country as

there are of Baptists, or even more. The communists say they are democrats, but on the other side of the fence the fascists put in the same claim. So do the New Dealers, but so also do the Princes of Privilege and the Economic Royalists. Press-agencies must keep half a hundred assorted ecomiums on democracy in standing type, like Western Union's canned messages for Mother's Day. Paraphrasing what Mark Twain said of a certain German word, every time one of our first-string publicists opens his mouth, a "democracy" falls out; and every time he shuts it, he bites one in two that was trying to *get* out.

I presume there is nothing to be done about it but to pass up our newspapers and periodicals unread, which I think most sensible people probably do. But for once my readers and I may as well have what fun we can get out of such a forlorn subject, so suppose we examine the word *democracy*, and see just where and how it fits in, or doesn't fit in.

The Century Dictionary says that democracy is "a system of government in which the sovereign power of the State is vested in the people as a whole, and is exercised directly by them or their elected agents". Good enough, I think; that seems to cover it satisfactorily. Then the United States is a democracy; so is England, so is France. Certainly. Therefore our publicists are right by definition when they put out their dreadful blether about "the three great democracies". Of course they are.

But why, by definition, is not Germany a democracy? Why not Russia? Our publicists seem to think not, but how do they make it out? Is not the sovereign power vested in the people of those countries, as in ours? Do they not hold popular elections and vote, as our people do? Are not Stalin and Co. and Hitler and Co. as competently qualified agents of the Russian and German peoples as Roosevelt and Co. are of the American people? Just where did Hitler slip up the other day when he called himself "the arch-democrat"? Perhaps he was a little immodest, but jobholders can't afford to be shrinking violets exactly; and did not Roosevelt strike much the same pose when he gave it out that he was for "democracy and still more

democracy"? Are not the popular majorities for Stalin and Hitler as impressive as Roosevelt's? It seems to me that I recall something of the kind in the press-reports of the last German and Russian elections.

But those elections were phony; all the people voted under duress. Can we be quite sure of that? I cannot. I think some of them, perhaps a good many, voted the affirmative ticket because they preferred it. Not all the voters were dragooned, at any rate, for some voted the other way, and were so recorded; so there seems to have been at least a shadow of an option available in the matter. But never mind; let it pass that the Russian and German elections were shotgun elections, and were therefore no proper test of democracy.

Very well, then, how about ours? For purposes of fair comparison let us take the last Presidential election. Is it not perfectly competent for any Nazi apologist to say that Roosevelt won that election by straight over-the-counter purchase with public money, and that it was therefore no fair index of democracy in America? Nor if he were honest would he make the utterly extravagant claim that *all* the votes for Roosevelt were either purchased or purchasable; on the contrary, he would say that no doubt

a great many of them were cast in all good faith. If a Hitlerian "democratic" press-agent said these things, it is mighty hard to see how anybody could refute him.

Stupid as I may be, I cannot get it through my head that job-holding by economic pressure is any more democratic than job-holding by shotgun-pressure. "It may be," as Dr. Pangloss said, "but if so, it has escaped me." The difference seems to me purely one of method. Therefore, taking elections and electoral procedure as a test — and I know of no other that is applicable — if the United States is a democracy, Germany and Russia are democracies. If Roosevelt is an arch-democrat (and I hardly see how he could cavil at the title) so certainly is Hitler.

Let us move on to the next point, and consider "the need for preserving democracy in the Western hemisphere". Whereabouts, I may ask. In Venezuela? In Mexico? Is it Brother Vargas' special brand of democracy that needs preserving, or Brother Ortiz'? If not these, whose then, for there seems to be a pretty liberal choice? Also, preservation from what? Naturally, from being undermined by the surreptitious infiltration of "undemocratic ideologies" imported mostly from Germany and Italy into cer-

tain parts of the lower Americas, and from Russia into other parts. But if you are going to stick to the dictionary's definition of the word, then tell us in what respect these ideologies are "undemocratic" as compared with ours. If, on the other hand, each man furnishes his own definition of democracy, making the word mean whatsoever it suits him to have it mean, the consequence is that it has no meaning that is either communicable or intelligible, and is something merely pitchforked in because it sounds good.

II

Talk about your "banner with a strange device"! It is hard to find a newspaper or magazine or even a professedly serious book, nowadays, that does not run off into caterwaulings about democracy; viewing with alarm because, in one or another part of the world, democracy is either demolished or is perishing and must be saved; or pointing with pride because here or there it has got a new lease of life and is bound to be triumphant. Kings bow low before the word, and every politician in the world posts the record that he has fit, bled, and died for democracy on every conceivable occasion in the

past, and will keep on doing so as long as he can hold his job.

All this is very tiresome; very tiresome indeed. I notice today that ninety-four persons of more or less prominence have memorialized the President to raise the embargo against the Spanish government for the sake of democracy. Their memorial includes all the usual catchphrases; as usual, it lines up the "totalitarian States" against the "democratic peoples and ideals". As usual, it is against measures "which confer increased power and prestige upon the opponents of democracy". As usual, it gets up a prodigious great sweat about the sorry reaction of "a victory of fascism in Spain".

The memorialists may be right in their contentions, or they may be wrong. What interested me was to look over their names and find to my certain knowledge six distinct and different brands of "democracy" represented among them; every known brand, I think, except one. It would be invidious to mention names, nor is it necessary; but I could not restrain my sinful wonderment at what democracy in Spain would be like if my revered friend Mr. A.'s special brand of that commodity should prevail there! If the brand of my impetuous young acquaintance Mr. B.

should prevail in this country, how long would it be before his ninety-three co-signers would be liquidated? What would democracy be like in China and Czechoslovakia if Messrs. C. and D. ran their respective democratic brands and earmarks on those unhappy countries? Such speculations are rather grim, perhaps, but they amused me, and their total effect was to put the effort of the ninety-four signers under a very heavy discount in my mind; I should say probably about eighty-five or ninety per cent.

As a matter of fact, whenever you meet the term *democracy*, you are safe in assuming that it was put to you in either ignorance or fraud. As used by the ninety-four, for instance, or by the newspaper I cited, it means simply nothing. I cannot recall a single instance in current usage where the term meant anything. In the early days of the Republic, as everyone knows, democracy was a term of abuse, like Jacobinism, Bolshevism, Radicalism, in years following. *Democrat* was a fighting word in Washington's time. Subsequently, when the franchise was extended and the erstwhile "filthy democrats" began to get votes, politicians began to make up to them, and the term began to be respectable; and now that every-

body has a vote, it has become a mere conjuring-term, empty of meaning, and in my poor opinion, an uncommonly disgusting one.

Neither ignorance nor humbug is particularly interesting. If our editors and publicists would give up the specious plea of democracy, I could go a long way with them. As it is, whenever they let the word drop out, especially when they are making comparisons between some other political regime and ours, I instinctively ask "How come"? and proceed to put the questions stated in the first part of this paper. Often, too—in fact, pretty regularly—I am moved to look around for symptoms of some deeper interest which the term may be covering—an interest in trade, in oil, in silver, or something of the kind—and I am bound to say I usually turn up a good strong scent of something much more substantial than the "democratic ideology". In about nine such cases out of ten, on close inspection, "democracy" smells to me pretty much as "patriotism" did to Dr. Johnson.

If the ninety-four memorialists had come out plump and plain, and said to the President, "We don't like the German regime, and are afraid of it; it affronts our sense of decency, honor, integrity, and

fair play; we think its methods of government are inhuman and monstrous, and they are so repugnant to us that we don't think you ought to run any chance, however remote, of bringing us into any closer relations with such people"—if they had put their case in terms like these, it would have been a sound one, and I for one would have signed that much of their memorial *ex animo*. If they had added that they thought the German influence in Spain may be the means of ultimately doing us out of a lot of South American trade, I should still respect their view, although I do not share it. One can have a great deal of sympathy with the general sentiment that our editors and publicists and the ninety-four memorialists express, insofar as they are honest about it and are content to stay on the solid ground of fact and common sense.

But when they set up the poor old tattered scarecrow of "democracy", and try to make us believe not only that it is a real live figure but also that it is peculiarly and preciously our own, they are, as I said, promoting either a piece of profound and lamentable ignorance, or of gross and egregious fraud.

AMERICANA

ARKANSAS

AT LAST a real contribution to the advancement of the human race comes from Little Rock, via a paid advertisement in the *Arkansas Democrat*:

DO YOU LIKE TO TALK?

The Southern Listening Bureau has been organized in Little Rock. Well trained, adept and experienced Listeners will hear you as long as you wish to talk. You may talk to our Listeners without interruption for a nominal fee.

Skilled associates, who listen attentively, their faces portray interest, pity, tenderness, fellow-feeling and understanding. A hearing will be harmonious, nerve easing, compassionate and satisfying.

Do you crave oral expression with an interested listener? Does the other party with the big mouth and loud voice keep you from getting in a word edgewise? Why shouldn't you talk as well as listen?

Does your wife talk you most to death? Send out one of our Listeners to your residence during the day and let Mrs. talk herself down and when you go home in the evening you can relax without a lot of gab to get on your nerves. A unique method of getting relief from garrulous members of your household and business. Lawyers, politicians and civic club members can try out their speeches in

this way. You can talk to our Listeners about your business, finances, servant problem, love affairs and children.

No scientific pretensions, no quackery, no records and no confidences revealed.

Write and Make Engagements Now
As a Charter Client at Reduced Prices
Address E-115 Democrat

CALIFORNIA

SYMPATHETIC treatment of the poor criminal is raised to a new shining high in the town of Salinas, according to an Associated Press dispatch:

Claustrophobia was advanced successfully today by Dr. Jaime de Angulo, 54, a retired physician, as a reason why he should receive probation from a one-year jail sentence. He pleaded guilty to grand theft, but argued that claustrophobia—a morbid dread of being in closed rooms or narrow places—made jail confinement hazardous for him. The Court granted his plea for probation.

AN appeal is taken to a Higher New Deal in the devoutly Christian community of San Francisco, according to the *Examiner*:

Formation of "negotiating committee with the Lord" for the success of the department store strike was announced yesterday by the Department

Store Clerks Employees' Union. A League of Prayer, to which the union invites any one who has a belief in prayer, regardless of denomination, will meet each morning.

THE brutally frank Los Angeles *Evening Herald and Express* minces no words on how the New Deal buys elections:

Farley estimated Lehman's minimum plurality in New York City at \$650,000.

GEORGIA

THE editor of the erudite *Banks County Journal* allows his readers a few words of homely philosophy:

While passing through the court house yesterday we saw a 70-year-old man sitting in the toilet studying a first reader. A little late to start in to get an education but better late than never, possibly. The place of study was a little out of the ordinary, but, strange things happen in this burg.

ILLINOIS

PROGRESS of the Higher Education in the up-and-coming Mid-West, chronicled by the world's greatest newspaper (*Chicago Tribune*):

Al Dreyfuss, president of the freshman class at the University of Chicago, today was beaten by a pig in a pie-eating contest.

KENTUCKY

THE happy-go-lucky days of Prohibition are recalled by an embar-

assing incident in Hodgenville, according to the alert Cincinnati *Enquirer*:

Larue County Sheriff's deputies were a little bewildered today. They confiscated a still and 30 gallons of liquor. Close examination showed it to be the same one taken last August in another raid. Someone stole it from the Court-house basement two weeks ago.

MARYLAND

NASTY slur on an unfortunate Free Stater in a headline in the celebrated *Cumberland News*:

JURY OF ELEVEN MEN AND ONE BACHELOR HOLDS EDWARD SOLOMON DESERVED DEATH

NEW JERSEY

A GREAT American statesman, in a great American State, brings forth a great statute:

ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. II

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Introduced October 17, 1938

By Mr. Wilensky

WHEREAS, The talents of Leni Lynn, thirteen-year-old Passaic, New Jersey, girl have been recognized by the motion picture and radio industries, she having been engaged by the said motion picture industry in California; and

WHEREAS, Her sudden rise in the motion picture industry has brought prominence and fame to the city of Passaic and State of New Jersey as well; and

WHEREAS, The life of this daughter of a humble factory worker, Frank

Ciofani, of Passaic, New Jersey, has again demonstrated by her success that this is a land of opportunity, thereby bringing nation-wide praise for the State of New Jersey, through the channels of the press, screen, and radio; and

WHEREAS, The State of New Jersey owes Leni Lynn a debt of gratitude for having brought to the attention of the entire nation that New Jersey, the State of her birth, in addition to being a great industrial, agricultural, and residential area, is the cradle of art, culture, and opportunity; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

That the Legislature of New Jersey present Leni Lynn with the official title of "New Jersey's Juvenile Song Bird."

NEW YORK

THE erudite *Evening Sun* opens its columns to Miss Inga Borg, dancer, who elucidates her latest terpsichorean creation, "A Goddess Disillusioned":

I descend from the heavens amidst a beautiful halo of colored cloud effects and then in dance and pantomime am supposed to live the life of a mortal on earth and as old age or the apparent end of human life approaches, I am supposed to become disillusioned and return to Mount Olympus with the cloud effects going in reverse and then am given a black out.

WHAT the New York intellect likes to read about, as revealed by a distinguished columnist, Miss Doro-

thy Dey, in the effulgent *Morning Telegraph*:

On the basis that the customers may want to know what is coming in this space soon, here are three columns in hand:

1. An interview with "D. L.," a former pugilist, now a celebrated Hollywood bootblack, raconteur, actor and advisor to the stars.
2. An interview with sixteen Irish chorus boys in a saloon.
3. The inside story of a beauty factory.
4. Hollywood from 12,000 feet up.

RHODE ISLAND

STREAMLINED religion gives Mother Church a jolt, according to an advertisement in the celebrated *Providence Journal*:

OUR LADY
OF LOURDES
CHURCH
Reopening with
BIGGER AND
BETTER PARTIES
Tonight at 8:15

IN OTHER NEW UTOPIAS ENGLAND

SIR FRANCIS LACEY, President of the Wiltshire County Cricket Club, offers a new angle on international affairs, as reported by the benign Manchester *Guardian*:

Had Hitler and Mussolini been cricketers I do not think we should have had all this trouble that is going on in Europe to-day.

DOWN TO EARTH

BY ALAN DEVOE

The Art of Awakening

A VERY large number of treatises have been written in late years on the subject of How to Get to Sleep. Getting to sleep, as the mounting sales of barbiturates and kindred drugs would indicate, is a problem with which modern humanity is acutely beset. Every day doctors write prescriptions of which the sole function is to ease the fretful user into nightly oblivion, and a book on methods of wooing sleep was something of a best-seller recently. No book, nor even article, however, appears to have been written on the subject of Awakening.

It is entirely right that the problem of faulty sleeping should have received such thorough attention. But that the problem of faulty awakening should have been so wholly ignored, as though it were a trivial thing of no consequence, is not easy to understand. Improper arousalment is at least as vicious as insomnia, and at least as potent a contributor to the nervous irritability and pervasive peacelessness which are increasingly becoming

the normal daytime mood of too many modern men and women.

Chipmunks, of course, are not troubled in these matters; nor are phoebes or frogs or foxes or any other creature save that ingenious and reckless biped who pays for his chromium bathroom fixtures and eighty-story skyscrapers by having a nervous system as fluttery and unstable as a floating feather. Woodchucks not only sleep peacefully; they also awaken peacefully. It is normal and natural to awaken from slumber in a state of refreshment and composure. But man, in his hectic and harried march of progress, has lost this ancient aptitude so completely that now he must re-learn it by a deliberate effort, slowly and painstakingly, like an infant learning to walk.

The man who invented the alarm-clock should have been hanged. There is a serious flaw in the texture of a civilization wherein man is daily introduced to the solemn miracle of sunrise by the

shrill explosion of a bell. No man who does not outrageously cheat nature of the sleep-hours he requires should need a jangling uproar to wake him; and no man who pretends to the dignity of a hedge-sparrow should be willing to tolerate it. It is of the essence, if you would learn the art of awakening, to banish the alarm-clock. Throw it away; break it in pieces; bury it. Cultivate, instead, the long-disused but serviceable artifice of getting into bed eight and a half hours before the time when you must wake. For a little while, until your living-schedule has fallen into its new pattern, this will seem a nuisance; and until the new rhythms have taken over your subconscious, you will perhaps need a safeguard against over-sleeping. But in the end it will be worth it. It will be worth it, you will find, to begin the quotidian life-experience with a slow emergent awareness of sunlight and dawn-clean air, rather than with a squalling stridence that jerks you straight from oblivion into the hurried worry-world of your daily occupations. A little thing, you say? Yes, a little thing. But it is the little things that can make or mar a whole day's mood.

Wake slowly. The professional pepsters, whose brisk slogans and

antics and demoniac calisthenics reflect our industrial over-speed, would persuade you to bounce from bed as soon as your eyes are open. Scorn these preposterous councils. Lie still, and be at peace. This waking-hour offers you, as does no other hour of the day, a chance to let the colors and scents and patterns of existence make an impress on your consciousness while it is fresh and unblurred. This is not a time to be taken lightly. This is a time to make the most of. Lie still.

Through your open window is coming an air sweeter and clearer than the air will be again today. It carries—even though you live in the most citified of city places—ancient and evocative fragrances. There is perhaps the thin sweet smell of rain-wet leaves and tree-trunks; perhaps the far-drifted pungence of salt water, eloquent of gull-wings and green dripping weirs; perhaps the winy scent of Autumn apples. If your home is in a city, these scents will all be undetectable an hour hence. They will have been overlaid by the exhaust of automobiles, blotted out by omnipresent dust. But now, in this clean, quiet hour of early morning, they still lie subtly on the air. They are yours for the breathing. Thoreau thought that scents like

these were quite capable of saving a man's soul, and I think that he was right.

There is no city canyon so deep and dreary that a sky does not arch overhead, and the spectacle of the morning sky is yours for the looking. Lie still, and look at it. Look at it for a long time, as you lie unmoving and relaxed and effortless. At this hour, even in a city, you are quite likely to see a flight of birds . . . vibrant-winged swifts, perhaps, or a high-flying hawk. They are good things to see, and astonishingly lifting to the human heart.

II

While you are lying immobile now, with the light of the morning sky brightening around you and perhaps some faint, far-carrying bird-song reaching to your ears, cast your mind to far places and review for your beguilement the Acts of Awakening that you know must now be taking place all around you. In woods and meadows and marshes all over your hemisphere, the surge of life is quickening again, after a night's sleep. On farmsteads a multitude of sleepy fowl are waking now, clucking and stirring and entering into the experience of the new

day. Pine-needles and the dark green leaves of laurels, which have been pendent during the lightless hours while dew was on them, are raising themselves now by an uncomprehended chemistry and thrusting upward once more toward the sun. On ledgy hillsides and old stone walls the lidless-eyed blacksnakes and adders have crept forth, numbed with night, to warm themselves in the returned heat of morning. Out of the East the sun has come up, and shines now upon us as a hundred million years ago it shone upon the snake-necked diplodocus, browsing and wallowing in the green-scummed swamps. The hot rays illumine and animate a teeming earth. Swallows dip and veer in this morning sky; the slugs and worms and creatures of the night seek their immemorial sanctuary under the stones and moss and dank, dead leaves; the flowers and plants and grasses open themselves to the light; the questing mammal, man, his agile brain and delicate nerves a-stir again after a night of rest, will presently fare forth again for new ingenious experience. Another day has come, another time the sun and stars have arranged themselves in the old pattern. The most venerable of all the miracles has come to pass again.

A thousand incomprehensible chemistries are taking place, a myriad holy transubstantiations presenting themselves to any thinking mind. Silently, and so subtly no man can see it, the trees are breathing; by a fathomless alchemy the green and tiny algae are transmuting the elements. Mindless and eyeless, the viscous-slimed earthworms are tunnelling under the ground, fulfilling their unreadable destiny, and on a leaf of watercress in a country creek the hordes of amoebas are moving and feeding and reproducing themselves in obedience to inscrutable impulse. I am not merely striving for a fine pretentious phrase when I say that now — now as you lie unmoving in this waking hour — you are having the opportunity to partake of a strange and special sacrament.

Well, you are entirely awake by now, entirely a part of the new day that has come. You have not given a single thought, since the moment when you returned quietly to consciousness, to the harassments and wearinesses that perhaps lie ahead of you before sundown. You have not given a thought to politics nor the tribulations of your business; the unpaid bills, the domestic irritations, have had no place in your thinking.

Time enough for those things later. You have been busy at another and a truer kind of contemplation, and you have made yourself ready for getting up and facing what may need to be faced today.

This Department receives, from time to time, friendly but earnestly hortatory letters, urging the putting aside for a time of the preoccupation with birds and beasts and plants and rocks and weathers, and the concrete offering, instead, of ways of Stopping Hitler or Combating Communism. This department does not know how to stop Hitler. It does not know how to combat communism. And in addition to these sorry dearths of knowledge, it harbors, too, a suspicion that the world is not going to be made happier by anything so simple and superficial as political re-alignments or economic tricks. It is not going to be made happier until men and women have learned the successful orientation of their individual human selves. It is not going to be made happier until Man has become aware of the scent of the May wind and the texture of snowflakes, and until he has learned how to savor golden-rod fields and brook-patterns and the afternoon sunlight on haycocks and even, I think, his simple rite of daily wakening.



POETRY

OATH

BY FRANCES FROST

LET not this heart be soft as wool
of silver lambs that follow crying
the shepherd's shadow beautiful
into the evening's fiery dying.

Let not be folded from the wind
this heart that hesitates and trembles,
but let the midnight blow unkind
where no near valley light dissembles.

In the dark mountains, lashed and scarred,
let it be driven; lost and lonely,
know for sky a gulf unstarred,
for shelter find a harsh bough only.

Allow this heart no breath for crying;
but let it learn enough of growth,
endurance, and the taste of dying,
that this love may be its oath.

A GIFT FOR PARTING

BY TRISTRAM LIVINGSTONE

Nor all the passion in the brimming heart
Will fan to flaming life the words you prize.
They are too often said, and for my part,
I shall forget them. Even in the eyes
Speaking the message, they are music cast
Upon the pulse of silence, and will fade
To nothingness as cadences that passed

THE AMERICAN MERCURY

Like whispers when another music played.
Enough that on an alien planet we
Molded one moment with a skilful hand —
Now let it float to kind obscurity.
The heart will learn, the mind will understand.
And so I give you for your faring South
Unfaithful lips laid on your faithless mouth.

PENNYWORTH

BY JOHN RUSSELL MCCARTHY

SPEND your bright penny at this Inn,
girl with eyes unquiet, breasts rounding, lips
parted, girl tense for the adventure.
Do not let life cheat you with its sweets;
be avid of the bitter, too. Let beauty not
hide the fulfilling brand of ugliness —
let the white hands redden, the narrow feet
widen against the earth; the kissing mouth
feel what it is to scream; let eyes welcoming
know a lover urgent, inescapable;
let also the desperate eyes grope for answer
in those of a stilled lover ready for the worms.

Let love be more than piercing joy —
let love distort your body with life, give your flesh
movement not of you: let you look and say,
miracle! that is not I; let your breasts
fill and flow. Spend your bright penny of beauty
that it buys not the sweets only but the paid-for
whole of life, the terror, the pain, the wonder.

To this Inn there is no returning —
The night is wide and the journey long for those
who have only smiled and tasted with cool lips.

THE LIBRARY

The Man Who Knew Everything

BY JOHN W. THOMASON, JR.

You drive out to Rock Creek Cemetery in Washington, which is near the Old Soldiers' Home and the site of the Civil War Fort Stevens (Abraham Lincoln stood on the parapet there under the fire of Jubal Early's skirmishers, and one Major Holmes said to him, "Come down, you fool!"—wherefrom one of Alexander Woollcott's good stories) and find, if you are persistent and fortunate, a piece of statuary hidden in a clump of evergreens. It is called, variously, *Grief*, or *Death*, or *The Peace of God*. You come upon it without warning, through a hedge; the dark foliage walls in three sides of its small grass plot, and a simple granite slab lifts up behind. And you will stand and look at it a long time.

It is a seated figure, vaguely female, wrapped and hooded in a great plain robe. The left foot is a little forward, the right withdrawn under the garment. The

right elbow rests in the left hand, and the right forearm comes up to support the chin; the remainder of the body is covered. A long diagonal fold of the robe flows unbroken from the shoulder to the ground, giving an extraordinary illusion of height.

All the lines lead to the shadowed face. It is a classic face, harmoniously Greek, its modeling as fluent and subtle as running water, and as timeless; it is neither young nor old. Yet the sculptor's magic has given it a quivering sense of life, arrested, but ever sentient, in a tide of grief. The precise technical trick may lie in the rendering of the eye-sockets and the eyelids, for the mouth is wholly immobile and the face unlined. But on that hooded head has fallen a sorrow transcending all regret and all despair. Passion is expended, and only Thought remains.

Augustus St. Gaudens did it for

Henry Adams, to mark the grave where his wife lies. There are three references to it in the Adams letters. The first is in the year 1891, from Sydney; he writes his brother that

it was natural . . . St. Gaudens should be nervous about the impression I might get of it [the statue] for I myself was so nervous about his success that I refused even to meet him from the moment he began the model, and persisted in the refusal till I left . . . not because I doubt that his artistic rendering of an idea must be better than my conception of the idea, but because the two could hardly be the same, and what is his in it might to me seem to mix so badly with the image that had been in his mind.

You note that he had an idea he wanted set in bronze; he transmitted it and fled to the other side of the world, and stayed there until it was finished.

Twelve years later, in 1903, he remarks that whenever St. Gaudens goes to dinner, somebody drags him into a corner and says, "Do tell me what you meant in that figure"! But St. Gaudens, he adds, could never use words at all, and can't explain; and he makes the blistering comment:

To a wearily historical mind like mine, it is curious that what would have been elementary to every other age of mankind, and which any beggar of Benares or of Tokio would read at a glance, is a sealed mystery

to the American mind. . . . I am astounded at the torpid perceptions of the average American; and the worst of all is the clerical preacher. He can see nothing but despair. He shows what his own mind is full of: but the idea of Thought has been wholly effaced.

Henry Adams, you gather, had a low opinion of what his compatriots called their minds.

Again, there is a note to Theodore Roosevelt, then President—December, 1908. Adams writes, testily:

If you were talking last night as president, I have nothing to say. Whatever the president says goes. . . . But!!! After March 4, should you allude to my bronze figure, will you try to do St. Gaudens the justice to remark that his expression was a little higher than sex can give. As he meant it, he wanted to exclude sex, and sink it in the idea of humanity. The figure is sexless. . . .

It never has the sun until afternoon, for the cold granite slab behind walls it from the morning; it faces west, receives the light of declining day, and looks into the evening and the dark. This, also, is an intended thing. Sightseers of the Federal City stare at it, and people who go to mourn among the miscellaneous *hic jacets* of that quiet and crowded place; most of them never heard of Henry Adams or of Marion Hooper Adams, his wife.

But perhaps each sees in it

(as John La Farge thoughtfully supposed) the thing that is in his own heart. For all time, it mourns, and it asks a Question of the Unknowable. What more is there for humanity, than to mourn, and to inquire. . . .

II

Henry Adams, the son of Charles Francis, the grandson of John Quincy, was born in 1838, and reared after the rigid models of that family and that day. He graduated from Harvard at the age of 20, and accomplished the grand tour in the same year, making the first of many transatlantic crossings in 1858. He served as private secretary to his father in Congress, and went with the staff to London when his father was named Minister to England, certainly one of Mr. Lincoln's happiest appointments.

After the Civil War, young Henry returned to Washington and did political writing until 1870, but held no more government offices. For seven years he had the chair of medieval history at Harvard, and was, concurrently, editor of the *North American Review*. It is considered that he made important and permanent contributions to the technique of historical study

in America; and under him the Nestor of American journals increased its prestige. His *Mont St. Michel and Chartres* established him not only as a medievalist, but as a writer of unusual merit. His *Education of Henry Adams*, a biographical dissertation to prove that the Eighteenth Century forms of instruction, to which he was subjected, are unsuitable to modern youth, is read with delight by thoughtful people everywhere. The work of his maturity—*History of the United States from 1801 to 1817*, 9 volumes—although open to some criticism as a family document, is still the authoritative treatment of that interesting period in the childhood of the nation.

Henry Adams lived for 90 years. His adult life spanned great events, national and international. He was born into that family which, for continuity of ability in both public and private business, is extraordinary in our history, admired alike by the annalists and the students of biogenetics. All doors were open to him from his youth up, and he was the intimate of famous men.

When he was born, Andrew Jackson had just stepped down, and the satellite Van Buren trod dutifully the echoes of Old Hick-

ory's resounding reign. The matters of discussion during Henry Adams' formative years would presently deluge the country in blood: it was the generation of the Impending Crisis, of Henry Clay, of Webster, and of John C. Calhoun. As secretary to his father in London during the War, he dealt with the precarious British neutrality, and kindred vexations, stirred up by alert and energetic agents of the Confederacy; and his services were probably more important to the Federal Union than those of Charles Francis Adams, his brother, who made the Virginia campaigns on the staff of the Army of the Potomac, and was rewarded with a brigadier general's brevet in 1865.

He observed the Washington scene in the turbulent, swashbuckling years of Andrew Johnson and U. S. Grant, and relinquished political aspirations he had, because his stomach was too delicate for that dish. He saw the Franco-Prussian war and the rise of imperial Germany; he saw Victoria's England mount to the years of apotheosis, to the turn of the century; and saw the nations reel into the abyss of the World War. He was an indefatigable traveler — Rome, Berlin, Munich, London, and the Scotch moors welcomed

him nearly every year. He visited Japan and the South Seas and Australia. He roughed it in the American West, land more remote from Boston and Quincy than the far cities of Europe. He was a professor and an editor; he delved deeply into the Middle Ages, and wrote creditable history. He knew, or could have known, all the important people in all the important countries through his long lifetime. And beyond his few fastidious and closely-written books, he took no special part in anything. His books — save one anonymous novel — deal with the past; the deep past. He was an onlooker, and to a limited extent, a commentator. His onlooking was for his own amusement; his comments for a restricted circle. His character had the hard, brittle outline of the Eighteenth Century, and his mind was an Eighteenth Century mind — keen, acquisitive, informed, skeptical utterly, and sterile.

One of the accomplishments of the Eighteenth Century was letter writing. There were no telephones in that tranquil age, and travel was difficult; all communications difficult. People, therefore, corresponded. When a man took his pen in hand, he had something to say; something that must be presented definitively, without verbal supple-

ment; and he put his mind on what he wrote. Therefore, I think, the vestige of Eighteenth Century correspondence which has survived is, to this day, fresh and vital, and of compelling interest to any student of human manners. The letter files of our age will yield no comparable treasures for the researchers of tomorrow. And Henry Adams had, superlatively, the art of writing letters.

Two collections of his letters have been made. The first, published eight years ago, covers the period from 1858 to 1891. The second, now presented, is from 1892 to 1918.¹ Both are edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford, who confined himself commendably to compilation, with occasional necessary footnotes. He had his difficulties, for, in 1885, Henry Adams, ridden by some tragedy and dissolution not here relevant, burned his diaries, his letter books, and as many of his letters as he could recall from correspondents; and from time to time thereafter he burned other accumulations. It is extraordinary that Mr. Ford has been able to reclaim so much, and it is also extraordinary that, as he presents them, they tell so complete a story.

¹ *Letters of Henry Adams, 1892-1918*, edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford. \$4.50. Houghton Mifflin.

The letters touch every subject under the sun, and are endlessly quotable. There is no stiffness about them, with any correspondent: I'm as busy as a flea on a clean baby, he tells one; two-pound trout came in festive bands wherever you stood on a bank and whistled, he wrote another, from the Tetons. True to the Adams tradition of independence, he was a democrat, or rather, a liberal; and true to the Adams tradition of frankness, he considered Cleveland a fat sculpin. On the martyred McKinley—the Major, he called him—he was devastating:

The Major was a person as completely outside my personality as any of his recent predecessors. His methods were as bad as possible. His function was that of a supple and highly-paid instrument of the crudest capitalism. To murder him was a gross absurdity that makes me despair of anarchy. . . . The true person to kill was Hanna—that senator!

About this time he began to call himself a Conservative Christian Anarchist; he saw no government anywhere of which he approved, and no leading men. Of Kaiser Wilhelm:

A lunatic, just barely outside of a mad-house, protects his venerable grandmamma from other robbers! The Twelfth Century never saw anything more grotesque!

Early in the 'Nineties he was bleakly prophesying: Russia will go to pieces very soon; she must pass through bankruptcy, political and moral. He bewails the smashing of Ming and Ch'ing porcelains by von Waldersee's Germans who sacked Peking in the Boxer Year; deplores it that they did not smash their own; he sees no health in the American adventure to the Philip-pines, and no future in the Pacific for his country—all of these, opinions proved by subsequent proceedings.

He lived in Washington, when not traipsing off to foreign parts; John Hay was perhaps his closest friend, but Roosevelt and all the big-wigs of that ebullient era were his intimates. There were Spring-Rice and young Ronald Lindsay in the British Embassy, selected Europeans, and General Miles on N Street, and a host of gentlemen and ladies, names not now so well-known. From Theodore he withheld admiration; but the President gave him endless amusement. He details a dinner conversation at the White House—the President held forth half the time on Roosevelt genealogy, the other half on San Juan Hill: a man obsessed with

cheap politics, and no redemption in him, nor any hope for the prolonged survival of the Republican party.

The years passed over Henry Adams: Taft was a Fat Boy; presently Woodrow Wilson was a Maryland schoolmaster; his friends died; and then the world was at war. He was an old gentleman who had outlived his friends, so that more ghosts sat around his Washington fireside than living persons. He had been everywhere, known everything, seen disasters he half-humorously prophesied come appallingly true, and learned that it didn't matter, after all. The interests in his life narrowed as the sun slanted down, but the pungency of his observations did not dull, nor the bitterness increase. It seems to me that, towards the end, there grew upon him the sense of futility that harasses every man who sees too deeply and who thinks too long. In this, also, he was Eighteenth Century; over-refined, over-civilized, and futile. The letters tell it all.

As the lonely statue in the cemetery, such a life arrests attention, and leaves a question hanging in the air.

THE CHECK LIST

★★★★ indicate a book of exceptional and lasting merit. ★★★★★ a distinguished and valuable work. ★★★ a readable and engaging volume. ★★ a fair performance. ★ an unimportant book, but possessing some characteristic of value. The absence of stars may be taken to mean the absence of merit.

FICTION

★★★★ THE LONG VALLEY, by John Steinbeck. \$2.50. *Viking*. Thirteen short stories by John Steinbeck, author of the celebrated *Of Mice and Men*, which will probably be forgotten shortly; and of *Tortilla Flat*, which may live a long time. These stories are of the simple and the humble and the commonplace, and in each some point of life is brought suddenly and sharply in focus to shine arrestingly and diamond-clear. Which is art. Presently it may be realized that John Steinbeck, within his medium, is one of the very best American writers alive.

★★★ GARLAND OF BAYS, by Gwyn Jones. \$3. *Macmillan*. A first-rate historical novel of Elizabethan England, setting forth at great length the brief but adventurous life of one Robert Greene, who divided his time between hack-writing and derring-do.

★★★ NOTHING TO CHANCE, by Charles Plesnier. \$2.50. *Reynal & Hitchcock*. A study of two French girls who marry for convenience, done in the Flaubert-Balzac tradition with overtones of present-day psychology. The story of the girls' disillusionment is studiously underwritten and undramatic. Yet it is a powerful, absorbing work, deserving of the *Prix Goncourt* it received.

★★★ WILLIAM AND DOROTHY, by Helen Ashton. \$2.50. *Macmillan*. A fictionalized record of the lives of Dorothy and William Wordsworth, in which Coleridge's sinister figure forms the tragic background.

The book has much charm and, surprisingly, dramatic force.

★★★ NATIONAL PROVINCIAL, by Lettice Cooper. \$2.50. *Macmillan*. A meaty novel giving a cross-section of the political, social, and economic life of England today — the locale being the West Riding section of Yorkshire. Miss Cooper offers no solutions for the problems she presents, but she has written a mature and absorbing book.

★★★ TESTAMENT, by R. C. Hutchinson. \$3.00. *Farrar & Rinehart*. Mr. Hutchinson's novels are always distinguished, if a bit confusing. This one takes place in Russia, and has the abundant characters and the teeming background which the author customarily offers. If you take the contemporary novel seriously, this is a "must"; one day Hutchinson will really come across.

★★★ AND IF MAN TRIUMPH, by George Snell. Illustrated by Paul Clowes. \$2.50. *Caxton Printers*. The story of a trek to California in gold-rush days, based on fact and told in lively, colloquial style. For those who like history colorful rather than factual. The format and printing are excellent.

★★★ BLACK IS MY TRUE LOVE'S HAIR, by Elizabeth Madox Roberts. \$2.50. *Viking*. A tender mystical love story of the Kentucky back countries, happily free of the excessive dialect passages which usually make this type of book hard to read.

★★★ THE HOUSE OF TAVELINK, by Jo van Ammers-Kuller. \$3.00. *Farrar & Rinehart*. Fine long tale of the decline and fall of the great house of Lourens Jan Tavelink, burgomaster of Amsterdam. The time is the fevered era of social change, between 1775 and 1795, when greater houses than that of Tavelink were crashing into ruin. It presents a vivid picture of the manners in the Low Countries, under the biting solvents of social revolution.

★★★ CHRISTMAS DAYS, by Joseph C. Lincoln. \$1.50. *Coward-McCann*. The prolific chronicler of life among the Cape Cod aborigines turns out a pleasant short novel for the Christmas trade. Nicely illustrated by Harold Brett.

★★★ THE DOOR OF LIFE, by Enid Bagnold. \$2.50. *William Morrow*. A complete change of pace from the celebrated *National Velvet*, this covers the last days in the pregnancy, and the first after birth, of an English gentlewoman, called somewhat confusingly "the squire". Emphatically this is a woman's book, exploring territories forever closed to man. Yet, even allowing for its esoteric nature, it seems pretentiously mystical and a bit disappointing. Miss Bagnold, though, still makes her characters come alive as few writers today can.

★★★ BRICKS WITHOUT STRAW, by Charles G. Norris. \$2.50. *Doubleday, Doran*. Tale of three generations, to show that today's taboos are the broken meats of tomorrow; and to each generation is its own bitterness. Jerome Kennedy, son of a substantial Christian home, but rebellious for all that, takes up with a toothsome wench, beds her, and marries her. His correct father abhors his doings but reclaims him, and he comes in time to his own bank and the leading station in the community, his second wife the preacher's daughter. Whereafter his own children adventure vicariously with their lives; they sleep around, they go Communist; only one of the four walks in the

path of respectability. A very fair survey of manners and morals in the Republic, from the Haymarket day to the present.

★★★ MARCHING ORDERS, by I. V. Morris. \$2.50. *Macmillan*. A prosperous Greek master-tailor in Paris, bored with well-being, comes into possession of an airplane. This and a thoroughly naughty American adventuress put a quick and dramatic end to his ennui. A good tale, with many original situations; very readable.

★★★ TO THE MARKET PLACE, by Berry Fleming. \$2.75. *Harcourt Brace*. To prove that transplanted human beings are never wholly successful, the author sketches various young outlanders who migrate to New York. There they quest the usual: love, fame, money. Those who stay, and those who return home, are equally baffled by the metropolis. The writing is sincere, but the structure of the novel leaves room for improvement.

★★★ ALL THIS, AND HEAVEN TOO, by Rachel Field. \$2.50. *Macmillan*. Rachel Field tells the life story of Mlle. Henriette Deluzy-Desportes, governess to first families in England, France, and presently the United States; around whom centered the exciting de Praslin murder case, a mystery which galvanized Paris and had no small influence in the events which brought about the final overthrow of the Bourbons. That case, itself, has attracted criminologists ever since and there is a considerable literature on it; it is yet unsolved. Not generally known is the remarkable afterlife, in the United States, of the gifted young lady who was one of its principals.

★★★ APROPOS OF DOLORES, by H. G. Wells. \$2.50. *Scribner's*. H. G. Wells takes his turn with the theme of the man married to a bitch. Dolores is one-hundred-per-cent poison (she is one of the author's less-subtle creations), but she finally dies, a bit mysteriously, and thus provides a happy ending. Mr.

Wells still writes more substantially than most of his juniors in the potboiling profession, and this is a satisfactory novel.

★★ THE LAND IS LARGE, by Emerson Waldman. \$2.50. *Farrar & Rinehart*. A first novel, covering the period from 1893 to 1916, wherein a Russian immigrant is disillusioned with America. The economic system, says the author, is the cause of it all. Not very convincing.

★★ LITTLE DOG LOST, by Tiffany Thayer. \$2.50. *Julian Messner*. Much of the author's customary gusto is missing from this book, probably because he "had to write about a guy", and women do not figure prominently. Mr. Thayer's guy is an unbridled introvert who sets out under an assumed name to seek the fundamental truths and their meaning, if any. He winds up in a hospital, considerably more relaxed.

★★ THE KENTS. By LeGrand Cannon, Jr. \$2.50. *Farrar & Rinehart*. The story of two generations of an American family, not entirely successful as a social document, which it intends to be. Jim Kent lost his money and his life in the panic of '64; his son started from scratch, worked hard, married, and wound up only a little better off than his father. Dull going in spots, but some of the minor characters are unusually well done.

★★ A WOMAN SCREAMED, by Robert Neumann. \$2.50. *Dial Press*. A stirring melodramatic tale of Hungary during the uprising under Kossuth in 1848. The protagonist is a simple, gentle soul, who through injustice became a savage fighter against the Austrian armies. The book suggests many parallels with modern times.

★ FOX IN THE CLOAK, by Harry Lee. \$2.50. *Macmillan*. The hard road a young artist has to follow in Atlanta, Georgia; most of them find it too hard, and strike for the cultural centers of the North. A

great many people and a great many incidents, perhaps too many; but they are studied and rendered with some skill. A first novel, it shows promise. Mr. Lee will do better work next time.

★ MARIA THERESA: THE LAST CONSERVATIVE, by Constance Lily Morris. \$3.50. *Knopf*. Biography of one of the great women, one of the great persons of history. She came to a shaky throne in a predatory time; hers was the age of Frederick the Great and La Pompadour, eaters of flesh. Considering that Frederick was her antagonist, she did well to lose no more than Silesia; it was her work that gave the unwieldy Dual Monarchy life for another two centuries, until the World War and Versailles. She managed her inheritance as a good house-frau manages her home: her subjects were her children, whether they liked it or not. She hated change, Jews, and Germans. Life was strong in her: she loved to dance and she bore fifteen children. Mrs. Morris is familiar with the European scene and has enjoyed exceptional opportunities for research. Now that Maria Theresa's Austria has gone to the dead, her study has a melancholy timeliness of old glories: yet, with this robust personality for material, she might have done a more vivid job.

DYNASTY OF DEATH, by Taylor Caldwell. \$2.75. *Scribners*. Another assault on the munitions industry, this time in the fiction convention. Mr. Caldwell's characters are stiff and do not live: they are simply pegs for his ideas. The book is too long for the action it carries: more than 700 pages. If the author has a message, the novel is not his medium. We are ready to concede that, in the munitions business, as in other activities, there are people who get ahead. The question reduces to simplicity: Does the armaments industry merely meet a consistent human demand with a supply, or does it, in the way of business expansion, machine to create the demand as well? Mr. Caldwell's thesis is the latter.

BETWEEN SLEEPING AND WAKING, by Dorothy Charques. \$2.50. *Macmillan*. An English rural novel, which drifts along, as vague and aimless as the life of a summer visitor. What it is about, we were unable, after reading it, to determine.

MISCELLANEOUS

★★★★ LISTEN! THE WIND, by Anne Morrow Lindbergh. \$2.50. *Harcourt, Brace*. Describes ten days of the Lindberghs' flight, in 1933, from Africa to Brazil. The wind is the villain of the piece—it checkmated the fliers at every turn—and around it Mrs. Lindbergh has written a gripping narrative, more skilful and mature than *North to the Orient* and distinguished by the same fine, clear prose. Colonel Lindbergh contributes a foreword and some sketch maps.

★★★★ LIFE CLASS, by Ludwig Bemelmans. \$2.50. *Viking*. A book to savor, to read and re-read. Loosely strung around the author's experiences in the service of the elegant Hotel Splendide (probably the Ritz-Carlton), it is remarkable for its quick, jerky, beautifully-vivid pen-portraits. Some of the subjects are recognizable—Otto Brauhaus and Victor, for example—but the really memorable characters dissected are the inconspicuous, unsung inhabitants of the hotel-world, here typified by the unfortunate Mr. Sigsag, of whom the author gives a touching and unforgettable picture. Illustrated, of course, by Bemelmans sketches.

★★★★ A SOUTHERNER DISCOVERS THE SOUTH, by Jonathan Daniels. \$3.00. *Macmillan*. Survey of the late Confederate States by a Southerner who brings to the task that rare thing in the South, a fresh and open mind. Mr. Daniels is editor of a Raleigh paper. He took his motor car and went to see for himself, always an excellent idea. He observed the planter, the share-cropper, the TVA, the negro, Tobacco Road, the poor white, the Alabama gullies, Swannee

River, the mountains, and the Delta. He even went to Arkansas. He writes with humor and understanding, and he is notably free of pretentiousness. Altogether the sanest book upon contemporary Southern Life and its problems that we have seen.

★★★★ PATTERNS OF SURVIVAL: AN ANATOMY OF LIFE, by John Hodgdon Bradley. \$2.25. *Macmillan*. Those who have read Dr. Bradley's penetrating essays in THE MERCURY will not need to be told that he is a master-hand at correlating science with philosophy, and an exceptionally stimulating thinker. In this brilliantly thoughtful (and often slyly humorous) work, he undertakes to consider the spacious question of whether there is "any meaning for mice or men in the restless drive of life"; in his quest for an answer he ranges over such diverse fields as the structure of pre-Cambrian rocks and the feeding-habits of tape-worms. He writes with lucidity and sometimes with loveliness, and only very simple souls are likely to be disappointed by the fact that his provocative arguments and expositions leave the question of the meaning of life as debatable as ever.

★★★★ THE MARCH OF THE IRON MEN, by Roger Burlingame. \$3.75. *Scribner's*. In a lively yet scholarly work, Mr. Burlingame shows how America invented itself into a nation. In the end, says he, these inventions will do us in, unless we figure ways and means to control them. Mr. Burlingame is no Marxist, and, indeed, polishes off old Karl in a couple of neat sentences. A tremendously interesting book, whether you like inventions or not.

★★★ THE REDISCOVERY OF MAN, by Henry C. Link. \$1.75. *Macmillan*. A stimulating book by the author of *The Return to Religion*. Dr. Link prescribes the "old-fashioned catharsis of physical exercise" and similar practical remedies, both physical and mental, as a cure for our current neuroses, and concludes with a discussion of social philosophies.

★★★HEX MARKS THE SPOT, by Ann Hark. \$2.50. *Lippincott*. An inquiry into the Pennsylvania-Dutch hex situation, full of queer characters and peculiar portents. Although this leaves the situation much as formerly, it gives a fascinating picture of some of the strangest goings-on in our country today.

★★★ON GOING TO COLLEGE. A symposium. \$2.50. *Oxford University Press*. Articles by Irwin Edman, Wallace Notestein, Chauncey B. Tinker, and other educators on the "values and rewards" of the various courses in the college curriculum. Some of the pieces are brilliant—especially J. F. Dashiell's on psychology—and all are good. Yet nobody mentions football.

★★★PLANTATIONS OF THE CAROLINA LOW COUNTRY, by Samuel Gailard Stoney. \$7.00. *Carolina Art Association* (Charleston, S. C.). Elaborate diagrams, descriptions, and photographs of the great plantations of the district, with a description of the Low Country and its people. A beautiful volume.

★★★VARIETY, by Paul Valery. \$2.50. *Harcourt, Brace*. This second series of essays by M. Valery has all the suavity recognized as an attribute of French writers. Not profound, in a scholastic sense, these papers are eminently readable and entertaining.

★★★TEN YEARS UNDER THE EARTH, by Norbert Casteret. \$3.00. *Greystone*. Fascinating adventures and discoveries in caves and caverns, set forth by an incredibly intrepid French speleologist. The photographic illustrations are remarkable, and the discussions of pre-historical art and magic (as indicated by primitive rock-paintings and simulacra) are of extraordinary interest. Readers with the slightest tendency to claustrophobia, however, are warned that these subterranean adventures will give them acute nightmares.

★★★PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE AMERICAN SCENE, by Robert Taft. \$10.00. *Macmillan*. Subtitled "A Social History, 1839-1889", this beautiful volume describes with text and contemporary pictures the development of photography during those years. The pictures, naturally, are fascinating and the text is comprehensive and dramatic. Altogether a valuable contribution to photography.

★★★LET THEM LIVE! by Stewart Holbrook. \$1.50. *Macmillan*. In his customary lively style Mr. Holbrook pleads for more and better public safety by describing past disasters (such as the Iroquois Fire) and industrial accidents, showing how steps have been taken to prevent their recurrence. There is still much to be done in the field, however, and it offers fine prospects of a career for young men. A book everyone should read.

★★★THE LETTERS OF LINCOLN STEFFENS, 1889-1936. With a Memorandum by Carl Sandburg. Edited by Ella Winter and Granville Hicks. 2 Volumes. \$10.00. *Harcourt, Brace*. The first letter is to Steffens' mother, the last to his son; and in between is a lifetime of sharp, informal messages to a vast number of friends and celebrities. They are all lively and stimulating, only wearing thin with the writer's adoration of the Russian Experiment and his still more cloying adoration of his young son. Steffens was an unusual personality, no matter how you look at him, and these letters are even more revealing than the celebrated *Autobiography*.

★★★IN SEARCH OF SOVIET GOLD, by John D. Littlepage and Demaree Bess. \$2.75. *Harcourt, Brace*. John D. Littlepage is a mining engineer, with a background of Alaskan experience, and, we would guess, an itching foot. Mr. Littlepage was ten years mining gold for the Soviet Gold Trust: 1928 to 1937. He is entirely interested in mining gold: as to politics, he cares for none of those

things; and his report on life and industry in the Soviet Republic seems to carry more conviction than most. Touching a few high points: he regards Stalin as an empire builder, comparable to Peter the Great. He thinks that, so long as Russia has Siberia, her future is assured, no matter what ideologies are inflicted upon her people. He finds in both the Czarist Russians and in the Stalin Russians a superior capacity for foresight. In his judgment, the late sabotage trials were based upon offenses against the State by the persons there placed on trial. Stalin, you gather, is a mighty able man. After ten years, Mr. Littlepage came home. He doesn't say exactly why, but you assume that such a man would have his reasons.

★★★ MUSSOLINI IN THE MAKING, by Gaudens Megaro. \$3.50. *Houghton, Mifflin*. An interesting exposé of Mussolini's early career as a Socialist free-lance journalist, agitator, and editor of the *Class Struggle* who cried "Down with the State", was "against every form of dictatorship", and called the national flag "a rag to be planted on a dunghill". These seeming contradictions are not as important as the consistency of Mussolini's life-long love of power and action. Although a hostile biography of Mussolini's early life, the book is free of the worst faults of most of the Duce's Liberal critics, whose loathing of the man makes it impossible for them to recognize many of his most obvious qualities, such as the disinterestedness of his pre-war career as a Socialist agitator or his essentially proletarian character. The book, nevertheless, is as disappointing as most books about Mussolini, since it does not satisfactorily explain or interpret the man. The seeming paradoxes of his revolutionary youth are not inconsistent with the making of a great revolutionary, nor are they terribly important. If there is an explanation of Mussolini's greatness to be found in his early background, none of his detractors have as yet developed it. Still, any book throwing fresh

light on his formative years or rise to power will at once find an interested public.

★★★ THE NATIONAL MIND: ENGLISH, FRENCH, AND GERMAN, by Michael Demiashkevich. \$3.50. *American Book Company*. Books of this sort, Spengler, Pareto, etc., are prescribed reading for those who seek an understanding of the contemporary cultures in decline and the totalitarian cultures on the ascendant. Professor Demiashkevich's contribution to the sum of human knowledge about the subjects treated is not important, but will, nevertheless, prove most helpful to readers who find the more influential treatises too heavy and too lengthy for the time and effort they have available for such reading. Lay readers might do well arbitrarily to reduce their daily intake of foreign and domestic political news from the papers and give the time thus saved to reading books of this character, and serious magazine articles which attempt to clarify the mighty ideas or cultural forces now in conflict and evolution.

★★★ WHAT ARE WE TO DO? by John Strachey. \$3.00. *Random House*. An oversimplified and over-logical plea for a triumphant labor party for Britain and America by an orthodox Marxist of great intellectual and verbal skill. Strachey prides himself on being a scientific Socialist who avoids the mistakes and weaknesses of the Utopian, Fabian, and gradualist Socialists. He favors the Popular-Front, Trojan-Horse strategy outlined by Dimitrov at the 1935 Moscow Internationale as the orthodox Party Line. Granted the premises, the argument is perfect, Strachey being a good dialectician. But the premises are largely incorrect, as the triumphs of Fascism and the disintegration of the Popular Fronts conclusively prove. So much of Strachey's case is irrefutable, being implicit in the world-wide crisis of Capitalism and Democracy, that his entire argument will be accepted *in toto* by many intellectuals. The trouble is that he relies too much on his own

definitions to prove his case. He refuses as a matter of definition to recognize Fascism or Nazism as Socialism, and, as a matter of Communist faith and doctrine, to acknowledge the fact that in Capitalist collapse in a country with a large middle class and land-owning peasantry (farmers in America), a labor-led Socialist revolution along Marxist lines has no chance whatever. For men of Strachey's intelligence to insist that German Nazism is merely Capitalism with its back to the wall is inexcusable. To argue that private Capitalists have the initiative or exercise leadership in the present Fascist revolutions is simply an act of Marxist faith. Curiously enough, it is most obtuse of the Communists to propagate in Britain and America this particular error, since, to whatever extent it may be believed by the ruling classes, it will make them more sympathetic to Nazism and Fascism than they would otherwise be. Mr. Strachey sells Nazism to British Tories by misrepresenting it, and fails to sell Communism to British or American labor by correctly representing it.

★★★ THE FAMILY, by Willard Waller. \$4.00. *Dial Press*. This book attempts a new approach to the study of the family. It deals with the influence of the family upon the personality, first in childhood, and then in adolescence, in married life, and, finally, in disintegration. Although written to be used as a text in college courses it will, doubtless, reach a wider field.

★★★ NINE CHAINS TO THE MOON, by R. Buckminster Fuller. \$4.00. *Lippincott*. Mr. Fuller, according to the publisher's analysis, has written here a guide book to the future, an intellectual balance sheet, a universal inventory of civilization, an appraisal of man's habits of thought, a provocative argument for a streamlined future in which man will devote to his own purpose the trends of progress. In addition he debunks the science of geometry, our conception of good architecture, our approach to economic problems, our use of words, and many other beliefs commonly accepted.

★★★ AFTERTHOUGHTS ON THE U.S.S.R., by André Gide. \$1.50. *The Dial Press*. An excellent summary of first-hand impressions and observations derived from a recent trip to Russia by a distinguished Frenchman of letters who was once an enthusiastic admirer of the Soviet System, but recently has been finding their means to Communist ends a little too much for him.

★★★ CARIBEE CRUISE, A BOOK OF THE WEST INDIES, by John W. Vandercook. \$3.50. *Reynal & Hitchcock*. Caribee Cruise is a delightful piece of work, done with sure knowledge and admirable craftsmanship. If you know that bright sea and those lovely islands, to read it is to revisit them: if they are strange to you, Mr. Vandercook will drive you to the nearest travel bureau.

★★★ THE NATION'S FORESTS, by William Atherton DuPuy. \$3.00. *Macmillan*. An interesting and informative survey of the forestry problem in the United States, with particular attention to the impressive achievements of the Forestry Service in repairing and counteracting the depredations of the lumbermen. It deserves the attention of every thoughtful citizen.

★★★ BRITISH AMERICAN ALLIANCE, by E. C. Buehler. \$2.00. *Noble & Noble*. An excellent debater's help-book on a timely topic. Contains a number of brief extracts from, and reproductions of, important articles and public documents, as well as a complete brief pro and con. This publication will be found useful for general information as well as for the preparation of controversial speeches or articles.

★★★ THE LAND OF THE BURN'T THIGH, by Edith Eudora Kohl. \$3.00. *Funk & Wagnalls*. A stirring chapter in the history of the opening of the last great tract of frontier land in South Dakota, in which two young women are the chief characters. A remarkable story of unusual courage.

★★★ **WHEN THE MERRY-GO-ROUND BREAKS DOWN**, by Wilfred J. Funk. \$1.50. *Funk & Wagnalls*. Mr. Funk has searched the public files of the last century with energy and purpose, to show that all our current bad news is news that men have heard before. Editorials of 1837, here reproduced, read astonishingly like editorials of 1938, except that the English is a little better. Such work is meritorious, in that it facilitates the sense of perspective essential to all intelligent estimates of the situation. And reassuring, too.

★★★ **FISHING MEMORIES**, by Dorothy Noyes Arms. \$3.00. *Macmillan*. A lady angler recounts her days in flood and field, and makes a beautiful little book of them. The illustrations, by Mr. Schaldach, go excellently with the text.

★★★ **IT'S AN ART**, by Helen Woodward. \$2.75. *Harcourt, Brace*. An informed and caustic commentary on American advertising, grown in the last decade to the front rank of Big Business. Consumers of whiskey, chill-tonics, motor cars, magazines, and all the other things we eat and wear and use, will find here information both pertinent and amusing. It is adequately documented, and it should be, for many of its statements are extraordinary.

★★★ **SAGAS OF THE EVERGREENS**, by Frank H. Lamb. \$3.50. *Norton*. An extraordinarily thoroughgoing study of one of our most important and fascinating kinds of trees. The author combines natural history and human history with expertness and penetration, and the resultant book is a remarkably searching work, as valuable as it is unusual.

★★★ **ARCHITECTURE OF THE EARTH**, by Reginald Aldworth Daly. \$3.00. *Appleton-Century*. Although this is primarily a text-book, there is hardly an intelligent reader who will not find interest and stimu-

lation in Dr. Daly's lucid and admirably co-ordinated account of the vast problems of geology and geophysics. The numerous photographs and diagrams are excellent and illuminating.

★★★ **WINNING OREGON**, by Melvin C. Jacobs. \$3.00. *Caxton Printers*. Another of the excellent monographs on the history of the Western United States. Dr. Jacobs uses abundant, and often fresh, contemporary material for his useful and readable volume.

★★★ **HISTORY OF MEXICO**, by Henry Banford Parkes. \$3.75. *Houghton Mifflin*. A compact (a little more than 400 pages) yet complete history, telling just about everything you need to know about the political, economic, and social development of our sometimes-not-so-good neighbor.

★★★ **TELL MY HORSE**, by Zora Neale Hurston. \$3.00. *Lippincott*. Miss Hurston investigated voodoo in Haiti and Jamaica while on a Guggenheim Fellowship. She won the confidence of the natives as few others have, saw more than most of her predecessors in the field, and reports her findings sanely and judiciously. As in our own hex-country, there is much legend about zombies and such, but, on investigation, little that is unexplainable. Yet it is ever a fascinating subject.

★★★ **PHILOSOPHER'S HOLIDAY**, by Irwin Edman. \$2.75. *Viking Press*. Essays, anecdotes, and reminiscences by Columbia University's best-known professor of philosophy — the whole making a very pleasing literary cocktail. Most of all the author loves Manhattan (see the chapter *Little Older New York*) and his fellow man (the best specimens of the latter are his collection of amateur philosophers). Although Dr. Edman is in his forties, a faint air of youthful precocity hangs over *Philosopher's Holiday*, but this should not lessen your enjoyment of an urbane and engaging volume.

THE OPEN FORUM

THE UNPOPULARITY CONTEST CLOSES

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Little did we dream what we were starting three months ago when we published a letter from Mr. James K. MacDonald and invited our readers to nominate the Americans whom they liked least. Since that issue of THE MERCURY appeared we have been inundated, as they say, with lists of names, most of them accompanied by caustic comment. We think this a healthy sign—that the great and pompous are not deceiving all of the people all of the time. We wish the contest could go on forever, but we have other things to do around here besides tabulate votes for Fiorello La Guardia and Barbara Hutton.

So this is the end. Herewith we publish: first, the winning list of names, which was submitted by Russell Green, of Atherton, California, who thereby wins a year's subscription to THE MERCURY; second, the final standing of the candidates; third, the names of contributors who rate Honorable Mention for having sent in unusually good lists. His Honor Mayor Fiorello La Guardia would seem to have won the election hands down.)

THE WINNING LIST

BY RUSSELL GREEN

Tom Mooney
Dale Carnegie
Fiorello La Guardia
John L. Lewis
William Green
Ernest Hemingway
Harold L. Ickes
Thomas Mann
Heywood Broun
Sally Rand

FINAL STANDING OF THE CANDIDATES

(Those receiving less than 15 votes not listed)

Candidates	Votes
Fiorello La Guardia	126
Rabbi Stephen S. Wise	98
Tom Mooney	92
Harold Ickes	91
Madame Perkins	87
Dorothy Thompson	86
Heywood Broun	84
Harry Hopkins	75
Governor Earle	73
Ernest Hemingway	70
Bernarr Macfadden	66
Barbara Hutton Mdivani Reventlow	64
Admiral Richard Byrd	60
Upton Sinclair	58
Elsa Maxwell	55
Maury Maverick	55
Edgar A. Guest	54
Dale Carnegie	52
Gertrude Stein	52
Major Bowes	49
Louella Parsons	40
William E. Borah	36
Jim Farley	36
Vito Marcantonio	31
Cecil B. De Mille	28
Granville Hicks	27
Norman Bel Geddes	24
Walter Damrosch	22
Nicholas Murray Butler	22
Tommy Manville	17
Benny Cohen	16
Tommy Corcoran	16
Charlie McCarthy	15
The Editor of THE MERCURY	15

HONORABLE MENTION

(Names of contributors who submitted the best lists.)

E. K. Gillett, Jr., New York City; T. J. McLaughton, New York City; Emory J. Barnes, New York City; M. DeLand, New York City; Mrs. John D. Lewis, New York City; Shirley B. Winters, New York City; Burt Brown, New York City; A. B. Brooks, Brooklyn, New York; F. X. Leyden, Denver, Colorado; Annette B. Lewis, New York City; C. G. Carlson, Bismarck, North Dakota; H. B. Drake, New York City; Paul Reitemeier, Brooklyn, New York; Mrs. Grace R. Morrow, Roton, New Mexico; J. B. Schultz, Mount Gilead, Ohio; Ben. Aurandt, Bridgeport, Connecticut; J. D. Blackney, Minneapolis, Minnesota; J. M. Noyes, Los Angeles, California; Wm. Allison Fuller, Cocoa, Florida; Mrs. Grace E. Hager, Havana, Cuba; Miriam Rosenbaum, Bridgeport, Connecticut; George L. Edmunds, Kew Gardens, Long Island; Henry Vella, Greenwich, Connecticut; E. J. Cook, Windom, Minnesota; John S. R. James, Cambridge, Massachusetts; T. R. Bradley, Cleveland Heights, Ohio; Helen S. K. Willcox, North Norwich, New York; Bennett Berman, New York City; Camilla Boone, New York City; Esther Cropp, Mitchell, South Dakota; Joseph S. Lewis, Elmira, New York; Harvey Stallard, San Diego, California; W. H. Singer, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; B. B. Kendrick, Washington, D. C.; Eric Schlubach, Providence, Rhode Island; Jasper Gould, New York City; Dr. R. F. Fasoli, Brunswick, Ohio; Jos. E. Bowman, Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Mr. and Mrs. N. D. Holbrook, III, Newark, Delaware; Duncan Underhill, East Orange, New Jersey; G. A. Kenderdine, Des Moines, Iowa; Miss Alba Duke, Louin, Mississippi; John A. Williams, Chillicothe, Ohio; T. Harrel Jackson, West Chester, Pennsylvania; Russell Carrell, Chapel Hill, North Carolina; Drew W. Kohler, Honolulu, T. H.; J. A. Kilgour, Sterling, Illinois; Wm. B. Gamble, Briarcliff Manor, New York; J. C. Maben,

Birmingham, Alabama; S. W. Roberts, Newark, New Jersey; Miss Janet Branim, Escondido, California.

FDR AS ARCHITECT

SIR: Permit me to present conclusive evidence of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's low IQ. Upon completing a study of the floor plan of his \$15,000 hideaway I rate him zero divided by infinity.

After a lifetime draped over a drawing-board, designing Gothic "stuckowe bungle-owes" with Southern exposures on all four sides, all I have to show are bum eyes, round shoulders, and a wrinkle in my belly. I am delighted to see Roosevelt entering a profession which I am leaving without regrets, to peddle hamburgers. Inasmuch as Roosevelt loves debt he will be interested to know that the words stuck-owe and bungle-owe come from the early Sanskrit as taught at Harvard: *stuck* plus *bungle* and two *owes* for the FHA.

Now that Roosevelt has successfully surpassed all previous efforts by combining nine defects common to amateurs in the plans for one small house, I look forward to his musical and dramatic efforts. I suppose his first concerto will end on the Lost Chord, and the climax of his first play be its collapse. Why are people who would never think of trying to design their clothing, boats, or cars certain that they need only drawing paper, a ruler, and a pencil to design the ideal small home? The possible variations in the arrangements of from 4 to 8 rooms are not illimitable; and all feasible arrangements with various exterior and interior treatments have been built many times. The old adage, "Perfection may be achieved but not surpassed" applies to the small home as well as to a Stradivarius. No one expects every violin to be of a different shape.

I must not drift, however, from a consideration of FDR's low IQ into a lecture on architecture. Two amusing blemishes in his dream hideaway are the lack of closet space

in the main bedroom and the missing dining-room. Inasmuch as Mrs. Roosevelt has just served on an architectural committee awarding a prize for small-house plans I know that she will be glad to aid her husband in correcting his dream house to comply with FHA standards. As long as he wants to write "Franklin D. Roosevelt, Architect", on his sophomoric sketches he had better learn his trade, read his State, city, county, and FHA codes, and subject himself to some of the actual indignities suffered by practicing builders under the New Deal.

LEON D. KAUFMAN

Los Angeles,
California.



SOUTHERN LADIES REPLY

SIR: So Southern women don't read good periodicals? That's what you Yankees think! I read the best ones off the press, and when I bought your November issue, I really thought I was buying another first-class magazine, but I found after several articles that it is mere trash! Any Editor that can't put any better, any more unbiased work before his readers than Isabelle Post's "What Is a Southern Lady?" — is pretty bad off too. A respectable press wouldn't allow such filthy opinions of an individual to go before a country. I am not going to break down her tale of the common, lazy, loose-moralled women of the South. The side of the Southern life she depicts is something that I have never seen or heard of. The men that she gossiped with that told of any Southern girl growing loose after three drinks are quite unknown to me. I am young, with lofty ideas and ideals and my men friends are too. I do not read Love Pulps, as she calls them. I tend to my own home with the exception of my laundry — a negro maid does that and she stays in her own place. She has never reached the social level with me as does the negroes in the North that you-all rub elbows with, even in your smartest places! Count us one in

our favor on that! And here's luck to you — you need it with a magazine that's bound to fail. I dare you to let my friends find this in your forum!

NANCY GILLESPIE

College of William and Mary
Williamsburg,
Virginia.

SIR: Your contributor's knowledge of the so-called Southern Lady is so overwhelming that I would not try to venture a reply except that I myself was born south of the Mason-Dixon line. My only comment is in the form of a story:

Some years ago a friend of mine (a Yankee and a gentleman) was crossing the ocean with a Frenchman and his wife, the latter a charming Mexican. One afternoon in the lounge the Frenchman mentioned his wife and my friend felt free to say that he thought her one of the most charming, beautiful, and cultured ladies he had ever met. "Yes, she is all those things," the Frenchman answered, and then he smiled, "but to my people she is still a dirty Mexican."

Miss Post may be an excellent housekeeper, a model parent, a brilliant woman, but to us she — and her kind — are still just Damyankes.

A READER OF YOUR PAPER

SIR: Having printed an attack which I shall refrain from any attempt to classify, to give space to a legitimate reply to that attack would be but evidence of the fair and just intent the public has a right to expect from reputable American journalism. Isabelle Post asks, presumably to know, "What is a Southern Lady?" To whom it may concern: a Southern lady is the same as a lady . . . anywhere. A person incapable of spitting venomous insults, a person who regards the truth, and is innately averse to blatant rudeness under shoddy guise of splenetic wit and humor. The mere name of Southern Lady, to the author of

the article in question, incenses to a point of ludicrous literary apoplexy.

Mrs., Miss, or Mister Post, you have done nothing to the Southern Lady; but you have, superlatively, shown up *yourself*.

Mrs. B. W. M.

St. Petersburg,
Florida.

SIR: Miss Post's lurid description of what she calls a Southern Lady has aroused me to such ire and indignation that nothing but a stark presentation of facts will relieve my feelings. In the first place, the term "Southern Lady" went out at the end of the War between the States. The plantations went, the slaves went, the money went—everything but the indomitable will of the South to live through the Reconstruction, and then rebuild a different kind of life. To do this the erstwhile Southern Lady had to take off her hoop-skirts, roll up her sleeves, and get to work—often without the help of any man, for all the able-bodied men went to war (contrary to the situation in the North); and few came back.

Next, Miss Post says that the large group of middle-class women, who claim to be in the "Southern lady group" in contrast to the "po' white trash", is the class she wishes to expose. To listen to her, you'd think the Indian caste system was a mere bagatelle to the South's; whereas, actually, I don't know my own class, and never thought about it before reading her illuminating article! My childhood friends have grown up along with me, and are still my friends. We are no privileged class. Let's look at us, as a group, and see if there is anything resembling Miss Post's picture. We all belong to the U.D.C., and most of us to the D.A.R. There is no stigma attached to those who don't belong to the latter, however. I belong more to show respect to my ancestor than for any luster it might shed on my name. We are all, with the exception of one or two, college graduates. We belong to Mother's Club, Parent-Teacher Organiza-

tions, book clubs, country clubs, missionary societies, and bridge clubs. We all do active work along the lines of charity and civic improvement, and we have fun, too, living full, well-rounded lives. Several who have no children still have their jobs. The rest keep house, with the help of one servant, as a rule.

And that is another source of my rise in temperature—Miss Post's account of our filthy homes, trifling servants, and lazy mistresses. She can't possibly have lived long in the South, or she would have known that when we hire servants we *talk* to the person for whom they have worked, and then try them out ourselves. It's probably a throw-back to the lady of the plantation caring for her slaves, but I *do* feel responsible for my servant. I talk to Susie about her children, advise her when they are sick, give them clothes, Christmas presents, and so on. We do *not* have filthy, disease-breeding homes because we are too proud or too lazy to attend to it ourselves. I don't know of any homes too cluttered with antimacassars, either. If we are lucky enough to have inherited some beautiful old furniture, we build our rooms around it.

Two more charges to answer, and then I can relax—our reading and our drinking. In spite of the fact that Miss Post says we "tote Confessions and Love Pulp" openly and discuss them animatedly, I have never seen one except on a newsstand! I do see the *Reader's Digest* in most of the homes, *THE MERCURY* in a few. *House and Garden*, *American Home*, *Ken*, *Esquire*, *Parents' Magazine*, *Redbook*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Colliers*, *Life*, and *Time* are in most of them.

Last but not least, our drinking. When we do drink it's with our husbands at *home*—before dinner, or a nightcap, maybe; or at a congenial gathering of several couples at somebody's home, where we partake of a number of moderate-sized drinks. It's never in smoke-filled bars or "21's" with strangers all around, but at *home*, where we feel free to add a slight glow to an already pleasant occasion.

So whether in Miss Post's classification I would be called a Southern lady, middle class, or po' white trash (each one about equally wrong, as there are no such strict divisions), I am proud and happy to be what I am — a Southern woman.

ANONYMOUS

*Newberry,
South Carolina.*

SIR: I cannot understand your policy in publishing such articles as "What Is a Southern Lady?" which can serve only the destructive purpose of fostering sectionalism and misunderstanding in our country at a time when, beset by real dangers both from within and from without, we need to cultivate a spirit of harmony and co-operation, especially among the intelligentsia.

MISS LUCY JOSLIN

*Belleview,
Tennessee.*

SIR: The myth of the Southern Lady is definitely dispelled by Isabelle Post's revealing, convincing article. And, since the South cannot produce ladies by birth, it is not surprising to find failure in a case where the opportunity is limited to associations resulting from "several years in a larger Southern city".

KENTUCKY SUBSCRIBER

*Mt. Sterling,
Kentucky.*

SIR: I come from a Southern town of about 25,000 souls, a considerable number of them wrapped in dusky hides. Of the business and professional classes, and the landed gentry, only the merest handful of families constitute the bona fide upper crust. We are aware of it—I doubt if the other good people are, for everyone goes to the same churches, clubs, parties. If others want to worship at our private shrines, it furnishes them and us with a lot of amusement—more or less innocent and malicious, respectively.

Having made due allowance for unavoid-

able ignorance on the part of Mrs. Post, she still seems to lack perception. It certainly must have been a strange town she was living in! Speaking not of the Elect, but of the average Southern housewife of the upper middle class—I never caught any of them reading the *Daily News* or the love-and-sediment pulps; it has always surprised me to see how many of the slick home and fashion publications are lying around in very-moderate-income establishments. In the small town the literary club flourishes mightily. Funny? Yes, it often is—and pathetic. But it is a groping in the right direction, and I have heard some excellent, thoughtful papers read in just such circles.

To consider our housekeeping sins—it is true the South is cursed with a plethora of too-cheap maids. Most of us get so exhausted trying to din a few ideas into their thick heads, we eventually give up the struggle. Possibly we should do our own work—some of us actually do!—but laziness isn't wholly a sectional failing. I have seen slovenly housekeeping and sloppy servants in France, England, and half a dozen of these United States, and it may surprise Mrs. Post to learn that I met the first cockroach I'd ever seen in New York. At home we have malaria, hookworm, and corn-field Negro servants to cope with—each one a major problem, but nevertheless there are a few houses that are fairly well run, a few housewives who know how to cook, and a regiment of well-trained, intelligent maids, if one is lucky enough to catch one unemployed long enough to hire her.

The Southern Lady is a rare article, too highly advertised, but she does exist; and I will be glad to send Mrs. Post a list of names of Southern women who are fitted by birth, breeding, tradition, education, charm, and all the rest of it to appear in any cultivated society and be perfectly at home there.

MILDRED WOODS

*Saint Louis,
Missouri.*

DECLARE THE WAR

SIR: Can anyone give a good reason for maintaining diplomatic relations with Stalin and Hitler? Each of these men years ago declared war on the United States. By the testimony of their own agents, they are operating in all our States; the Nazi and Soviet Embassies are actively co-operating with gangs of plotters, spies, goose-steppers, Ogpus, and armed military organizations in our midst, boring from within and laying plans to turn us over to the tender mercies of Hitler or Stalin. That's the modern cowardly and underhand way of conducting war. The old-fashioned pirates had nerve and guts. Their moral code was incomparably higher than that of Stalin and Hitler. Pirates didn't pose as uplifters or expert judges of race-purity or agents of God Almighty or saviors of oppressed minorities. Their only spies were field glasses, their publicity departments were their previous exploits, their emblem was the skull and cross-bones, in place of the swastika or sickle and hammer. But their intentions were no more hostile than those of the present German and Russian governments.

Another feature of the intrigues of these modern Soviet and Nazi termites is their elaborately-staged bluff that Communism and Nazism are diametrically opposed and deadly enemies of each other. Whereas the fact is that they are working together in the hope of greasing their jaws with the fat of America.

Since the Dies investigation has begun to smoke out some of these serpents and step on them heavily, we hear the hiss of the wounded vipers, trying to crawl from under the heel of the Committee. One wonders how far the New Deal will care to go in an attempt to make the United States safe for these vermin. Isn't it about time that the Nazi and Soviet Ambassadors be sent home with all their crews? Eventually we shall have to delouse ourselves. Why not now?

E. V. WILCOX

*Chevy Chase,
Maryland.*

WORKING IN COLLEGE

SIR: Contrary to the view of Mr. Moth-
eral, I do not feel in the least smug, heroic,
or dishonest when I say "I worked my way
through college". I consider myself lucky
to have had such an experience, and I
would heartily recommend it to anyone
who wants to try it. When I entered the
University of Chicago in 1932 I had \$200.
The first month cost me \$223. By moving
to a cheaper room, by doing most of my
own laundry and pressing, by eating on 90
cents a day, and by cutting entertainment
to a minimum, I reduced this amount to as
low as \$40 a month for some months. One
year four of us men students kept an apart-
ment and cooked our own meals. In this
way we cut our food costs to \$10 a month
each. Exclusive of tuition the total cost for
six years of 8½ months each at University
was \$2778.72, an average of \$54.48 a
month. For the entire six years I kept a
record of all expenditures, which were as
follows:

	Total	Monthly average
Books and thesis	197.43	3.87
Rent	628.80	12.33
Board	1123.85	22.03
Laundry	60.00	1.18
Clothes	219.12	4.30
Carfare	126.31	2.48
Amusements	158.02	3.09
Athletics	30.51	.60
Sundries	234.68	4.60
	2778.72	54.48

The problem of earning the required income was one of synchronizing the work schedule with the classroom schedule. Generally there were more part-time jobs available than I could handle. The usual wage per hour was 40 cents, but every job except one paid more than this. I did cashiering, bookkeeping, selling, teaching, tutoring, counseling at camp, soda-jerking, window-washing, waiting on tables, typing, general office work, guiding, and lecturing; and I

gave individual instruction in social dancing and skating.

I generally worked about 25 hours a week, which yielded about \$50 a month. Thus my average work-school week totalled 61 hours per week—and some laborers work that even today!

Of course, my grades were not always high, but at the end of six years my average course grade was one-tenth of a point below "B". I did make a couple of "F's", but thanks to the university educational plan I removed them by paying a small fee and writing the examination again.

If I ever have a son who wants to take a crack at working his way through college I'll certainly say, "Go to it boy! Even if you fail it's worth a try".

E. GRANT YOUNG

*Chicago,
Illinois.*

SIR: The author of your article "Work Your Way Through College?" feels qualified to condemn the "work-your-way-through" notion. So most struggling students are "out-and-out" liars when, after finishing their college course, they declare they have worked their way through?

One-fourth of my expenses for the first two years in college have been borrowed, and three-fourths have been earned by work in a mill, on a farm, in the ice-business, waiting on table, washing dishes in the college kitchen, doing office work, or from funds received from scholarships. I enjoy the struggle, and, when I depart, I do not wish to be termed a liar, or even an equivocator, because I say I have worked my way through college.

ROBERT BARNEY

*Kalamazoo,
Michigan.*

SIR: Many thanks for your exposure of the "worked-my-way-through-college" nonsense. I can deeply appreciate the plight of the working student for my collegiate expenses were entirely paid by my parents.

I was fairly intelligent, yet my classes and outside preparation consumed 60 to 70 hours every week. Where is there "spare time" for working in such a program? Without a single financial worry my academic work took so much energy that my health was undermined. Result? Pulmonary tuberculosis. Total time in bed so far: 3 years. Back on my feet: next Summer.

ROBERT E. STEWART, JR.

*Chicago,
Illinois.*



SOOTHING FICTION

SIR: I am a kind of writer and have sold a little here and there. That is to say, once in a while an editor gets up on the good side of his bed and so comes down to the office refreshed, spirited, eager, and, of course, able to spot genius. And that is where I come in; my story is taken and printed. Then, often for months, I am nothing again. The story gets its chance to entertain the masses, and afterwards is forgotten. I write a lot of the kind of stories which are forgotten in ten minutes. I want you to sympathize with me.

Your magazine has not been blessed with my stories, although I have thought about sending you one now and then, one which I feel sure is up your tree; but in the end I don't send it because you seem to publish so few stories. The world is, I think, getting somewhat tired of the persistent serious tempo of a good many of our American magazines. All around us is this eternal struggle for laughter, for goodness, for peace and prosperity. Even the mere process of earning a living, of wearing a good suit of clothes on Sunday, of kissing your wife good-bye in the morning, all this is a struggle; so the American prints should try to get around to the sort of living I experienced when I was a little kid, running around in my bare feet. I want my magazines to do a good job of quiet laughter. Where is our good old American laughter any more? I went home the other day and

asked my father where it had gone, but he did not know. He was sitting in his kitchen looking out of a window into a dirty, ugly, and, at the same time, beautiful alley; and he could find no words to express the absence of laughter. But your magazine is a good one and is fearless, which is important. There are so few of your kind in the world, why not break up your seriousness with a pleasantly-related story once in a while? It would do people good. It would give people who are dizzy with digesting the awful truths a kind of relief, a breathing spell.

A MERCURY READER

Canton,
Ohio.



MR. POLLOCK'S FAN MAIL

SIR: In his latest I-Hate-Roosevelt opus, "Apology for Success", Channing Pollock states that the final decision was against continuing his radio broadcast because one official of the sponsoring company feared being "cracked down on". That, after all, was merely an opinion and not a proved fact, and therefore, until Mr. Pollock's broadcasts are really "cracked down on" he hasn't, it seems to me, a case strong enough to call for a 9-page build-up of his pet theories. It would take pages to answer adequately Mr. Pollock's lengthy harangue; but, in effect, his article leads one to believe that he fears the Administration's efforts "to diminish the amount of money at the top and to increase the purchasing power at the bottom", and he practically admits that the underprivileged should be kept that way. "Apology For Success" is outstanding in that it panders to and provides the nourishment necessary for Mr. Pollock's super-ego, keeping it functioning with high efficiency. It reeks with a self-complacency that is tantamount to telling its readers that "we" are the "best people" because "we" at the moment, happen to be successful and have what it takes. At the same time the article looks down its literary

nose at those who are on Relief, forgetting that "there but for the grace of God go we!"

L. NATHAN

San Diego,
California.

SIR: One is inclined to wonder (insofar as THE MERCURY is concerned) whether Channing Pollock is sacrosanct, or whether, perhaps, his effusions may be subject to comment, as are those of any other writer? I am moved to this query by the severe censorship of my (gentle) indictment of Mr. Pollock for his "Two-Thirds of a Nation", and the printing of an objection to a very trifling detail in that article, with a typical, juvenile Pollockism by way of reply, which was no reply at all. Not that Mr. Pollock is important; but he is symptomatic of many writers and commentators in these screwy times, notably in their naïvete, and their straining after sensation.

Not so long ago Lewis Mumford was flayed (deservedly) by Albert Jay Nock. Yet Mr. Nock remarks that Mr. Pollock is "a very useful man". Now, I respect and admire Mr. Nock above any living American writer; in fact, Albert Jay Nock and Channing Pollock do not (by any stretch of propriety) belong in the pages of the same publication. One must observe, however, that Mr. Pollock may be a very useful man — to Mr. Pollock; otherwise his usefulness is confined to the increase of the sum-total of American imbecility. I have remarked Mr. Pollock's proneness to male-hysteria. His latest offering, "Apology For Success", exemplifies this trait. Mr. Pollock reminds one of nothing quite so much as the neurotic old maid, looking under the bed for that man, and hoping to find one there. Should he perform his under-the-bed discoveries one day or night, and fail to find a Roosevelt there, the consequences might be appalling. For Mr. Pollock would lose, immediately, the material for lectures and writings for which he finds a ready market (which no one begrudges him, least

of all myself), and by which he justifies his opinion of himself as one of America's successful men. Mind you, if Mr. Pollock finds happiness and content in his vision of Mr. Pollock as a "success", that is marvelous for Mr. Pollock, and no one could destroy the picture. It all depends on one's idea of that which constitutes success, and the means by which one attains it.

As a Moron Mentor, it must be admitted that Mr. Pollock is a huge success — to precisely the degree of Moron Mentors such as the Winchells and the McIntyres, and the rest of his multitudinous, fellow moron-breeders. They make money. In due time, they are afflicted with an income surtax. Upon which the weeping and wailing over the trials and tribulations of "successful" men arises to the heavens. For each victim, it appears to be a fresh discovery that the "haves" are mulcted or penalized in favor of the "have-nots". And that is where the naïvete enters. Throughout the ages, government (meaning politicians) has seduced, corrupted, soothed, and generally exploited the mass-poor, by the device of soaking the well-to-do. And so long as government endures, this will be the recognized racket. Why, then, should the Pollocks find it surprising; or finding it so, why be so naïve as to rush into print with their sobbing and other evidences of the uninstructed? (Particularly, when "the survival of the unfit" is a unique, age-endorsed human institution?)

In all, as the saying goes, Mr. Pollock is distinctly a psychopathic case.

J. E. FULLER

Minneapolis,
Minnesota.

SIR: For so obviously easing his conscience as a self-made Have by expressing, in "Apology for Success", his vindictive contempt for his economic inferiors with that eloquent violence which so bluntly betrays in every word and phrase the self-induced feeling of guilt characteristic of all monied intelligentsia, I submit the name

of Channing Pollock as an entry for your Unpopularity Contest.

His article constitutes an excellent entry for the Grand Prize of which the Good Book speaks. A prize of silver coins — thirty of them.

PHILIP SCHRANKEL

Sackett Harbor,
New York.

SIR: I have just been reading "Apology For Success", by Channing Pollock; and I feel that it is my duty to tell you how much I enjoyed it. Here is an article that is "constructive" in the best sense. It "tears down", yes — but it "builds up", too. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that first it clears away a great deal of debris and then it erects, on the spot, a beautifully-proportioned, soundly-build edifice of thought. This may sound highfalutin' — but it is an article of this kind that exonerates THE MERCURY of the charge that it always publishes "destructive" articles. It would please me if you could let Mr. Pollock know how much I approve of his article. Not that it matters particularly — yet, after all, I do, to some extent, represent "reader reaction", don't I?

REESE D. JAMES,

Director of the Courses in Publishing,
University of Pennsylvania.
Philadelphia.

62

HELPLESS MODERNS

SIR: Walter Lippmann recently wrote a column, called "The Modern Malady", about our streamlined education, and our dependence on machines for calculation, instead of training and using the minds which the God of our Fathers gave us. But it all goes much further than that. The education which our modern children are receiving today does not even ensure their survival, unless the surrounding mechanics of their lives are guaranteed to continue. Animals at least do a job as regards their young — they teach them to feed themselves, to

guard against cold and enemies, and thereby to continue the race from which they sprang. But what do we do? We turn our children loose in a world of mechanical substitutes for human action, with no preparation against the day when those contrivances will fall of their own useless weight. And the human mind, taught to lean on an unsound prop, may likewise fail itself under the crucial test of a responsibility it has never had to meet.

Recently it has percolated into the human consciousness that all we have learned of ease, comfort, and security may suddenly dissolve. The steady influx of tragedy from other countries has at last penetrated, and we are realizing that there is no sure reason to believe that this land of ours is exempt or above the mistakes and tidal waves of the world. Then what? Simply this: we will not have cellars filled with home-grown food against the cold and bitter frost of long Winters, nor woodpiles stacked to warm the hours of our arrested lives. "The crowds that drift with all the winds that blow" as Mr. Lippmann says, "are caught up at last in the great hurricanes." And they go down with them — for what else can these untrained hordes do? How can minds oriented to warmth, food, light, cheer — all without personal effort — suddenly revert to fundamentals and meet the chill and the aloneness that can sweep over the helpless who do not understand their own existence? It is not a fair deal to bring our own, or anybody else's, children up defenseless.

Of course this may be the new way of operation for the old law of "survival of the fittest". Nature has her way of clearing off the debris, and maybe we are that. But it is killing off more than just our lives, for it has gone deep, this streamlined horizon; it has bitten into nerve, muscle, heart, and soul, and only by reverting to where our roots are dug do those of us who have roots survive at all.

AMY G. BASSETT

*Bound Brook,
New Jersey.*

MOTHERHOOD IS NOT BUNK

SIR: I have never read a copy of THE MERCURY that I didn't long to write a burning letter to the editors. Your November issue is not any more provocative than usual, but I have decided to settle the urge and forever after accept your articles for what they are — sensational, yellow-journalistic propaganda.

I refer to the article "This Motherhood Bunk", and cannot help but smile at the smug ignorance of the anonymous author. Anonymous, with her eventless and easy pregnancy, cannot pose as an authority. Let her experience those indescribable days of the nightmare of continuous nausea, which is so lightly termed "morning sickness", and depression so profound that each night's sleep is prefaced by the wordless prayer that there will never be another morning. Let her endure this for three successive pregnancies and add the final two-day period of discomfort climaxed by six agonizing hours on a delivery table, to emerge bruised, torn but triumphant, from a shadowy world of grave nurses and obstetricians whispering ominously of craniotomy. Let her suffer an experience so grueling, so terrifying, that the seriousness of a Caesarean is a haven of peaceful security. Let her add to that days and weeks of nursing, and the heart-aches of seeing her child blighted by a chronic illness, and never for a moment be tempted to reveal to one of her children what their advent involved. Let her experience the daily, hourly, strain of attempting to properly rear a family on a small income and then discourse on "This Motherhood Bunk". She won't be an authority. Only those who have suffered, struggled and then seen the result of years of love and self-sacrifice lowered into the grave are authorities on "Motherhood".

AN ANONYMOUS ANSWER TO ANONYMOUS
*Quincy,
Florida.*

SIR: Congratulations for your article "This Motherhood Bunk" which appeared in the November number. I am glad to know there is another mother (in addition to my own) who is willing to admit how overdrawn the "motherhood-martyrdom" chatter is.

INTERESTED READER.

*Chattanooga,
Tennessee.*

SIR: "This Motherhood Bunk" could only have been written by a very ignorant and intolerant person. I am also of the opinion she has a very highly developed ego! For any one insignificant woman to think (because *she* was fortunate enough to have an easy child-delivery) she is able to judge, and put the stigma of "Bunk" upon the sufferings of hundreds of thousands of other women who have gone through this "experience" is perfectly idiotic!

I was one of that very small and fortunate group who had "an easy time", in fact, judging by "Anonymous'" description of her own experience, I beat her by long odds! I did not even consult our doctor or have any examinations until a month before the baby was expected. All I can say to "Anonymous" is, just because you have been so very, *very* fortunate to have had *one* baby without intense suffering don't think you are in any position to accuse other less fortunate women of "putting on a show". And, another thing, do not be too sure that if you have a second child, you will necessarily have a second "easy time" — it might be quite different.

H. E. D.

*Santa Monica,
California.*

SIR: A normal mother is forced to conclude that the writer of "This Motherhood Bunk" would have signed her article "Anomalous" instead of "Anonymous". As a mother, and as a thinking, reading person, I am aware of the recognized scientific fact that different individuals may be sensi-

tive to pain in varying degrees. Thus what might amount to excruciating sensation for one could well react as mere discomfort for another, a fact of which your author appears ignorant.

Were Anonymous a well-informed person, she would also be aware of the recent concerted campaigns of doctors themselves against needless pain in childbirth, to say nothing of the thousands of yearly deaths which statistics chalk up to this cause. It is amazing that dangerous conditions recognized by the medical profession should be laughed to scorn by this brave lady! I suppose in such a tragic instance, Anonymous would airily conclude the victim merely hypnotized herself into her agony; and, to transpose the circumstances of the old joke, would blithely state, "She only imagines she is dead!"

CONSTANCE EILEEN COCKING

*Arlington,
Virginia.*

SIR: I do think Anonymous who wrote about "This Motherhood Bunk" is just too brave and wonderful and grand for words, and I'm sure that thousands of mothers of large families will be left speechless by her heroism, and her intimate, obstetrical confidences.

Really, MERCURY, you do let your intelligent readers down pretty badly sometimes.

G. C. H.

New York City.

SIR: The hurrah-for-labor-pains article in the November MERCURY didn't mention whether the author of "This Motherhood Bunk", (good title) was the wife of Sitting Bull or not, but I'll bet there's a dash of Cherokee on the family-tree somewhere, for she reminds me of a squaw I once read about.

When Mrs. Redwing realized that her pains were approaching that delightful three-minute period, she slowed her galloping pony down to a stop and signaled for

the rest of the tribe to go on and think nothing of it. She jumped off the pony's back and lay on the ground until Sitting Bull Jr. made his appearance. Then she bit the cord, took a double hitch in it, washed the papoose in the creek, tied him to her back, and, hopping on her pony, raced to catch up with Sitting Bull Sr. Really nothing to it.

RUTH H. LANE

*Los Angeles,
California.*

SIR: Your article, "This Motherhood Bunk", amuses me very much. Anonymous runs so true to form. Some are martyrs and have a "Hard Time", and some, like Anonymous, are heroines and have a "Hard Time". Like all of us, she has to talk about it. Have had two myself but this is the first time I have written to a magazine about it!

HILDEGARDE MASON

*Westport,
Connecticut.*



WHAT IS A LIBERAL?

SIR: "Most of those who now pass as Liberals, are Tories of a new type." Thus wrote Herbert Spencer in 1883, in *The Man versus the State*. Fake-liberalism was a timely subject then. With its vast growth over the past half-century, fake-liberalism is even a more timely subject now.

While Roosevelt stresses "liberalism" and "liberal legislators" in fireside chats, and while politicians of all parties rush to get aboard the streamlined, "liberal" train, is it not time to ask: what is this so-called liberalism? And we find, on analysis, that this new, fake-liberalism is nothing but old-time Toryism with extra gadgets; while these crowds of pseudo-liberals, in reality, are political offspring of the old-time Tories, operating under false colors, masquerading in stolen costumes, and seducing the public under an ancient and honorable name.

Read your histories. Consult your sources. The true liberals of the past hated and fought everything for which these fake-liberals stand — intrusion, interference, and coercion of society by government, concentration of authority and over-extension of governmental powers, consequent restriction of civil rights and liberties; in a word, paternalism. Your true liberal was the champion of the individual against the State. He formulated the principle, "that people is governed best, which is governed least". And his counterpart cannot be found in any American party of today.

On the contrary, the creed, platform, or propaganda of all present parties, is the exact belief of old-time Toryism — from the New Deal, through the republicans, to the communists and socialists — the belief that the State is all-supreme, and the citizen a subject, a potential slave. By the same token, all these fake-liberals — from Roosevelt through the Landons and Bartons to the Browders and Thomases — are only Tories in disguise, "Tories of a new type." In other words, these fake-liberals are the true reactionaries of the time.

ENOCH MORSE

*Minneapolis,
Minnesota.*



AS SHE IS SPOKE

SIR: Hugh Morrison's article "New Yorkers Can't Speak English", is a classic in its verities. A common language is a tie that binds the people of our nation into a homogeneous whole; but if the idiom of the Atlantic seaboard is to prevail, radio communication with the hinterland will have to be suspended or broadcasting will needs be carried on through an interpreter. There is no State in the union where English is more correctly spoken than it is in Ohio. The reason is not obscure. For generations, spelling, phonetics, and pronunciation have been taught by the drill-method in all courses from first grade to senior year in high school, and the path from student-

desk to dictionary has been assiduously trodden.

F. T. ANDERSON

*Hogeland,
Montana.*



DIFFERENCES OF OPINION DEPT.

SIR: W. H. Chamberlin's article on Stalin in the September issue of *THE MERCURY* is, like practically everything he has written on Russia, as near the truth as the late, unlamented near-beer approximated the genuine thing. Typical of this "nearness" is his statement that "Pushkin was able to publish a poem of sympathy with the exiled Decembrists". Pushkin did write such a poem, and it was conveyed to the Decembrists in the depth of Siberia's mines. But had the authorities learned of that poem, Pushkin would have found himself in Siberia too, if not minus his head. The poem was not published till many decades after Pushkin's death.

ALEXANDER KAUN

University of California

*Berkeley,
California.*

MR. CHAMBERLIN REPLIES

SIR: I accept Professor Kaun's criticism, and admit that "published" was a careless word to use in connection with a poem which reached only a limited circle of readers during Pushkin's lifetime. I cannot, however, accept his dogmatic assertion that "had the authorities learned of that poem Pushkin would have found himself in Siberia too, if not minus his head". For it is a well-attested historical fact that Pushkin told Czar Nicholas to his face that, had he been in Petrograd at the time of the uprising of the Decembrists, he would have been "in the ranks of the rebels". (Cf. E. J. Simmons, *Pushkin*, p. 253.) Such a statement would seem to carry at least equivalent risks with the publication of the poem of

sympathy with the Decembrists, and Pushkin suffered neither beheading nor exile to Siberia as a result of making it. I fear Professor Kaun was guided by Stalinite rather than Romanov practices.

When Professor Kaun draws from the question of the publication of Pushkin's poem the scholarly deduction that "practically everything I have written on Russia is as near the truth as near-beer approximates the genuine article" he reminds me of the prosecutor at a Soviet sabotage trial, erecting a mountain of accusation on an extremely slender basis of fact. The main thesis of the article in which my reference to Pushkin occurs—that Stalin's dictatorship is far more oppressive and more sanguinary than that of the Czars during the preceding century—is obviously not seriously affected by the question of how many people were able to read Pushkin's ode to the Decembrists at the time when it was written. If Professor Kaun had other factual criticisms, I assume, from the tone of his letter, that he would not have omitted to produce them. I feel justified, therefore, in taking his letter as an unintended but convincing tribute to the substantial historical accuracy of my article.

WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN

*Tokyo,
Japan.*



WANTED: PERFECTION

SIR: Have been interested in the letters published in *THE MERCURY*, especially in the one signed "Another Husband". He complains about the so-called modern bridge-playing, gadding wife, who is only a wife in so far as she is supported or kept by her husband; but fortunately there are few of these women as compared with millions of sincere wives who work at their job just as their provider works at his. Women are human, and there are as many different types of women as there are men. The ideal wife or husband is a scarcity and then everyone has a different ideal. A Naval

Officer who had met women in every part of the globe when asked what he considered the ideal wife said, "She must be lovely in character and appearance, a sweet-heart, a partner, with a little of the courtesan in her nature, a great deal of the mother in her attitude towards her man, brave and gentle. She must be a mixture of all of these plus the capacity to love her man through all, being true to him in thought as well as act." Quite a large order, but why look for paragons?

AMERICAN HUSBAND

New York City.



ORCHIDS

SIR: The apparent injustice done the American Civil Liberties Union by Harold Lord Varney (*MERCURY*, October 1938) shows him up as one of the many drunken word-jugglers who infest the ancient folds of your most degenerate periodical.

C. H. PENDLETON

Albuquerque,
New Mexico.

SIR: I was formerly of the opinion that *THE MERCURY* was a fairly good magazine. But any periodical which publishes such an article as "What Is a Southern Lady?" is obviously of the lowest type.

LYMAN W. CLEARDY

New York City.

SIR: I have just finished reading your revolting, smart-aleck publication. On one of the pages you ask, "Where are the people today who laughed so uproariously when Hoover predicted in 1932 that if Roosevelt were elected factories would shut down and grass grow in the streets?"

I happened to be one of those people, and at the present moment, I am waiting for an order to be filled for a new Dodge automobile which is delayed because the factories are so far behind in deliveries.

WILLIAM GUILD

THE PREP SCHOOL QUESTION

SIR: The intemperate and misleading diatribe "Don't Send Your Boy to a Prep School" in the October issue of *THE MERCURY* would not be considered worthy of notice had it not used figures from a more dispassionate and judicial article entitled "Twelve of the Best American Schools" in *Fortune* in 1936. The twelve schools discussed in *Fortune* were Avon Old Farms, Andover, Exeter, Groton, Deerfield, Hotchkiss, Kent, Lawrenceville, St. Mark's, St. Paul's (Concord), Thacher, and The Hill. By his references, the author of your article seems to be directing his barbs primarily at these twelve schools. Yet if life at these schools is so unwholesome, why is it that alumni are so eager to have their sons attend them? The writer of this letter has for many years been a teacher of mathematics in a Virginia boarding school for boys. Thirty-eight of the 225 boys in this school this year are sons of alumni, and nearly as many are younger brothers of alumni. And what is true in this respect here is true to a greater extent of some of the prep schools of the East.

The writer of the article in *Fortune* thinks that the twelve schools have not produced enough nationally famous men "to justify their existence", and he goes into figures — 1 President, 1 Supreme Court Justice, 27 Senators, and so on. The two articles taken together do seem to have made out a good case against these prep schools, particularly in the realm of politics. The graduates of these schools are capable, energetic, and public-spirited. Why have not more of them excelled as politicians? Could it be that they are unwilling to trade, to compromise, to be a bit crooked at times, in order to get votes?

A few years ago two Lafayette College professors, Dr. B. W. Kunkel and Dr. D. B. Prentice, made a study of *Who's Who In America*, Volume XV (1929), in an effort to determine what contributions to intellectual leadership were being made by various colleges of the country. In actual

number of graduates listed in *Who's Who*, Harvard led with 1374; Yale was next with 937; and Princeton third with 480. And these are the three universities of the country to which prep school boys go in largest numbers! The University of Illinois, with an enrollment of nearly 9,000 had 124 graduates listed in *Who's Who*. The University of California, with an enrollment of over 12,000, had listed only 185 graduates. And so for most of the enormous universities of the Mid-West and West. Yet these are the institutions that draw their students almost entirely from public schools.

The two professors showed that the 10 institutions of the country with highest rank as determined by percentage of living alumni in *Who's Who* were as follows: Hampden-Sydney College, 7.45; Amherst, 7.40; Harvard, 6.60; Wesleyan, 5.98; Trinity (Conn.), 5.45; Yale, 4.78; Hobart, 4.75; Williams, 4.54; Princeton, 4.50; Haverford, 4.20. It will be noted at once that 7 of these 10 colleges are in New England, where are also located 9 of the 12 prep schools referred to above. What is the natural and probable inference? A small Presbyterian college in Virginia heads the list. Only in recent years had the enrollment at Hampden-Sydney exceeded 150, yet listed in *Who's Who* are 56 of its alumni. The Dean of that remarkable little college has recently informed the writer that only 2 of the 56 entered Hampden-Sydney from public schools.

JOHN S. WALKER

*Woodberry Forest,
Virginia.*

SIR: During the past year I have been an avid reader of your excellent magazine, and in this time I found but one error. You should have incorporated "Don't Send Your Boy to Prep School" with "Three-Ring Circus for Morons". I am fourteen years old and have just finished my junior year at a prep school in Connecticut. Previous to going to this illustrious hall of learning, I had gone to a city public-high. Here the stu-

dents, while not of the greatest minds, were honestly trying to learn a little of what was taught. They felt that some sort of an education was valuable in later life. At the fashionable prep school, none of this is found. The student body has but one idea. To bluff the teachers for four years and then, with the ink still wet on the diploma, either go off to college (alas!) or step into a button-pushing job in Dad's business.

The boy in regular high school can foster no such rosy outlooks. He may work a wee bit harder, for this reason. So "when the revolution comes" which do you think will be better equipped for earning an income?

HARRY LEE, JR.

New York City.



IN BRIEF

After paying us the nice compliment that "yours is the one publication in which the language of our fathers is treated with respect", Mr. G. Harwood, of Chicago, rebukes us for "a partisanship that starts at every page". The tenor of our adverse criticism reminds him of a trenchant line in Parker's *Right of Way*—"Get out of my sight, you're guilty as hell!" Well, Mr. Harwood, we call them as we see them. . . . M. E. Reid, of Prescott, Arizona, opines that Roosevelt may still be the most popular American, "but the set-back he and his purge took recently should make him feel like the last number on the Hit Parade". . . . All those interested in real political corruption in the raw should take a visit to the sovereign state of Pennsylvania, according to Philip I. Gibbons, of Newark, New Jersey. . . . Mr. Nock, who is not infrequently roughly handled by our contributors, got so many compliments this month we are sure he would be embarrassed if we showed them to him. Representative is the comment of Cloyd W. Filler, of Mineral City, Ohio, who says, "I get a great kick out of Albert Jay Nock. There is no more effective person writing in the United States

today". . . . A cryptic comment comes from W. L. Fadely, proprietor of Fadely's Drug Store, Birmingham, Alabama. Says he, "M. O. Gannett, author of 'The Drug-Prescription Racket' is right. Every word is true. Too busy jerking soda to write more". . . . The Henry George School of Social Science in New York City is evidently setting out to influence editors and win contributions. We have a raft of letters from friends of that school suggesting that we print articles on the Single Tax. . . . We don't have room in the Open Forum to print open letters — to anyone. But some good ones came in this month, notably from J. W. Keener, of Delaware, Ohio; C. L. Schanzlin, of Upland, Indiana; Theodore Stalzer, of Kirkwood, Missouri; and M. J. Pike, of Long Beach, California. . . . The best poems directed to the Open Forum were received from Frank Putnam, St. Louis; Warren T. Hanley, Santa Barbara,

California; and O. C. G. Brettel, of Toledo, Ohio. . . . From the huge mass of our other Open Forum correspondents we can mention only the names of the writers of what we thought were the best letters. They are: R. W. Flint, St. Paul's School, Concord, New Hampshire; William E. Dempster, the *Herald Tribune*, New York City; Olga L. Rosmanith, New York City; Fitzhugh Dade, Henderson, Kentucky; Dorothy Cleveland King, Leverett, Massachusetts; Rev. Edward J. Carson, New York City; Arthur Cranston, St. Maries, Idaho; Vernon Way, Durham, North Carolina; Langdon and Helen Phelps, Edgemont, Pennsylvania; John S. Green, San Francisco; Dr. Harris Gruman, Lebanon, Pennsylvania; Anne B. Nesbitt, Santa Monica, California. . . . If the Open Forum mail continues to grow we expect to be made an honorary postmaster by Jim Farley. How we are boosting that man's business!

THE CONTRIBUTORS

WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN (*Karl Marx, the False Prophet*) is the noted newspaper correspondent, now in China. **KENNETH BROWN COLLINGS** (*Annual Report on Air Safety*) has been an airplane pilot for seventeen years. **LAWRENCE DENNIS** (*After the Peace of Munich*) frequently contributes to THE MERCURY. **FRANCES FROST** (*Oath*) is the author of verse that has appeared in many magazines. **STEWART H. HOLBROOK** (*The Steel-Strike War*) is the author of *Let Them Live!* (Macmillan). **TED LEITZELL** (*Cabbages and Commissars*) lives in Chicago. **MAX LERNER** (*Epistle to the Right*), formerly an editor of the *Nation*, is profes-

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The Bethlehem Steel Quiz

TRY IT ON THE FAMILY

To start the New Year, Bethlehem has made at least one good resolution. It is to frame these quizzes in such a way that your friends who have a smattering of metallurgy, engineering, physics or the more rarefied chemical formulae will not have an unfair advantage over you. You'll find that the alternatives you are offered in this set of questions on steel serve as guideposts to the correct answers. With this help a grade of 60 ought not to be uncommon.

Correct answers to the Bethlehem Quiz will be found on page x.

1. When a learned friend tosses "soaking pit" into the conversation, you know at once the term refers to:

- (a) *A Chinese torture chamber in which one drop of water at a time fell on the head of the victim until he became insane.*
- (b) *A furnace used in steel plant operation to insure complete and uniform penetration of the heat.*
- (c) *An immersion chamber for early Christians, invented by the Emperor Diocletian in 299 A.D.*

(d) *A natural basin at the foot of Maiden Lane, Manhattan, where the wives of the early Dutch settlers laundered their clothes.*

2. The noted Mr. Stiegel, who made the glassware collectors clamor for, was also famous during colonial and revolutionary days as:

- (a) *An architect* (b) *A landscape gardener*
- (c) *A tinsmith* (d) *A strategist*
- (e) *An iron founder* (f) *A duellist*

3. Which seven of the following accessories to feminine dress are usually made of steel:

- (a) *bobby pins* (b) *switches* (c) *snaps*
- (d) *hair nets* (e) *hair pins*
- (f) *handbag frames* (g) *scarves*
- (h) *girdles* (i) *compacts* (j) *eyebrow pencils*
- (k) *lipstick cases* (l) *shoe eyelets*

4. The steel industry buys large quantities of saplings each year for two of the following purposes:

- (a) *For reforestation and landscaping of plant grounds.*
- (b) *To burn into charcoal.*
- (c) *To stir molten metal and reduce the total amount of carbon in the steel.*
- (d) *To weave into screens to conceal metallurgical laboratories.*

5. What steel producer is also a major shipbuilding organization and a large steel construction company?

Answers to Bethlehem Steel Quiz

(See page ix)

1. (b) A furnace in steel plant operation used to insure complete and uniform penetration of the heat. After the ingot molds have been removed, the glowing ingots are immediately transferred to the soaking pits where they are held at uniform heat prior to rolling.
2. (e) An iron founder. During part of his career, Stiegel was a prosperous and prominent iron founder with furnaces in Eastern Pennsylvania.
3. (a) bobby pins (c) snaps (e) hair pins (f) handbag frames (i) compact cases (k) lipstick cases (l) shoe eyelets. Feminine fripperies make up a sizable proportion of the 2440 lbs. of steel per family consumed in this country in 1937.
4. (a & c) For reforestation and to landscape plant grounds; to stir molten metal and reduce the total amount of carbon in the steel.
5. Bethlehem Steel Company.

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(See page iii of this magazine)



*** indicate an outstanding performance,
** a competent performance, * an acceptable performance. ††† denote exceptional recording, †† efficient recording, † poor recording.

ORCHESTRAL

***††† *Suite from le Coq d'Or*, Rimsky-Korsakow: (Victor, three 12-inch disks, \$5.00). This is realistic orchestral reproduction at its best. Brilliance is often obtained, phonographically, by distortion of the relative emphasis of the various choirs; not so here. Detail is crisp and clean, but the great virtue of these disks is the truly astonishing maintenance of proper proportion among the groups of instruments. The resulting brilliance is Rimsky-Korsakow's and the London Symphony Orchestra's, not the recording engineer's, who deserves formal recognition for his integrity. Eugene Goossens conducts the decorative score with sensitive devotion to its values.

***††† *Symphony No. 5, in E Flat*, and *Pohjola's Daughter*, Sibelius: (Victor, five 12-inch disks, \$10.00). The strings throughout the Symphony are a revelation in recording; and the brass at the climax in *Pohjola's Daughter* is plainly magnificent in its disciplined, mellow unity. There is some improbable dominance by the woodwind at the start of the Symphony; but these performances by Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra easily supersede the earlier versions by Robert Kajanus and the London Symphony, and will not themselves easily be superseded.

***††† *Prince Igor: Polovetzki Dances*, Borodin: (Victor, two 12-inch disks, \$4.50). Leopold Stokowski and the Philadelphia Orchestra are not easily excelled in a work of pronounced emphasis on rhythm and color. The brilliant orchestration by Stokowski himself is dazzlingly translated into superb records.

***†† Pictures at an Exhibition, Moussorgsky:** (Victor, four 12-inch disks, \$8.00). Lucien Cailliet of the Philadelphia Orchestra, obviously possessed of considerable technical ability, has sought to improve upon Ravel's orchestration of Moussorgsky's best-known piano work with an arrangement of his own. This was brave; and the new transcriber's cinematic insistence upon underlining the patent and magnifying the obvious leaves the engaging ghost of Ravel still master of the field. Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra reproduce their *confrère's* work with their usual splendor; but those who possess the fine records of the Ravel orchestration (also on Victor), played by Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony Orchestra, will not willingly exchange them for this.

***†† Trois Nocturnes pour orchestre, Debussy:** (Columbia, four 12-inch disks, \$6.00). A delicately conceived, but badly-played and indifferently-recorded addition to an old phonographic hazard. D. E. Inghelbrecht and the Orchestre des Festivals Debussy (*quand?*) are the executants.

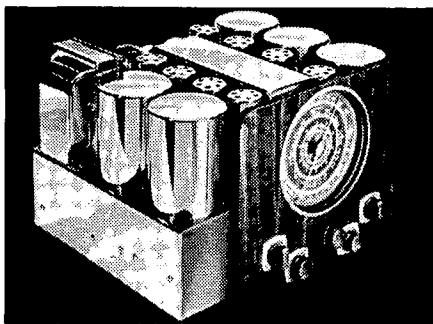
***†† Magic Flute Overture, Mozart:** (Victor, one 12-inch disk, \$2.00). A sound performance of a great overture. Indeed, now the standard for records of this work, because of the superior recording of a good orchestra (BBC Symphony) under Arturo Toscanini. Richard Strauss's interpretation, whose nervous intensity was so exciting, was handicapped by the band, and by the recording.

***†† Invitation to the Dance, Weber:** (Victor, one 12-inch disk, \$2.00). Greater distinctness in the upper frequencies is the point of superiority of this re-recording of a famous disk of a decade ago. The Philadelphia Orchestra of the present record has not the engaging suavity of its predecessor, nor has Dr. Stokowski won reticence with the years. The old record (Victor) is a good record, and preferable to the new.

CHAMBER-MUSIC

***†† Quartet in D, Op. 45, Roussel:** (Columbia, three 12-inch disks, \$5.00). A fine display of the ability of the Roth Quartet emphasizes the tedium of this music.

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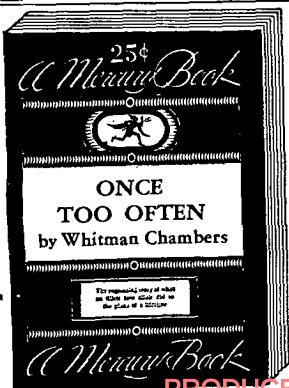
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